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## • Joe: Phenix's: Right: Bower •



"HE IS A DESPERATE FELLOW, AND MAY GIVE US A TOUGH FIGHT," SAID THE KENTUCKIAN.



## Joe Phenix's Right Bower;

OR,

## The Fifth Avenue Police Spy.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF THE "JOE PHENIX" NOVELS,  
"THE FRESH OF FRISCO" TALES, THE  
"DICK TALBOT" SERIES, AND  
"THE LONE HAND"  
STORIES.

## CHAPTER I.

## A STRANGE STORY.

ONE of the eminent "statesmen" that the metropolis of the New World, the great city of New York, once sent to Congress to "represent" the Empire State, in a quarrel in the "halls of wisdom" attempted to silence his opponents by exclaiming:

"Youse ducks t'ink you're smart, but dere's mighty few of you could cross Broadway widout gitting run over!"

These words occurred to the mind of the well-known detective, Joe Phenix, as he halted on the upper corner of Broadway and Fulton street, watching the pedestrians, dodging for their lives in amid the teams, as they essayed to cross the street.

An elderly gentleman, small in stature, with a full, dark beard, thickly sprinkled with silver threads, like his hair, and a slight Jewish cast of features, well dressed, lost his footing, and would have fallen if the detective had not rushed to his assistance.

"My dear sir, let me tender you a thousand thanks!" cried the old man, when the two were safe on the curbstone.

And then for the first time getting a good look at his rescuer's face, he exclaimed:

"Why, this is Mr. Phenix, the detective, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, and this is Mr. Lenbold, I think. I recognize you, although it is over ten years since we have met."

"Quite correct!" the little man replied. "I retired from active business life about that length of time ago; but I am glad I have met you, Mr. Phenix, for I need advice which you can probably give."

"Let us take a cab, and as we ride uptown to my house I will explain."

The detective replied that he was at the other's service, so a cab was engaged and the two entered it.

With the veteran detective, Joe Phenix, the reader is doubtless acquainted; if not, a few words will explain that he is one of the most indefatigable man-hunters the metropolis has ever known.

He won his reputation originally in the service of the Police Department, then retired, set up as a private detective, and had been so successful in some famous cases as to make his name noted in police and criminal annals.

This little man, Solomon Lenbold, ten years before the time of which we write, was one of the prominent men of New York.

A wonderful "railway king"—railway wrecker, his enemies declared, who thrived upon the ruin of other men; and when he retired from active business life, with a fortune estimated to be all the way from ten to twenty millions of dollars, the world of finance breathed more freely.

He bore the reputation of being a hard, merciless man, distrusted by friends and hated by foes.

Outwardly he apparently lived up to his agreements; in secret, his opponents declared, he did not, and was always ready to take a mean advantage if he could arrange the matter through third parties so as to conceal his share of the transaction.

After the two entered the cab, there was silence for a few moments, the old man seemingly collecting his thoughts, so the detective had a chance to study him.

Ten years had made a wonderful change in the once great financier.

He had grown old before his time.

Though not yet sixty, he looked to be fully ten years older, and the keen-eyed bloodhound could detect signs of weakness in the once strong and resolute face.

"This is rather a peculiar case," Mr. Lenbold at length spoke; "and I have been thinking for a couple of days of consulting

some one in regard to it, but was really at a loss to decide who I had better see about the matter."

"It did not seem to me to be a case for a lawyer, and was not exactly in the line of a physician, but my accidental encounter with you has suggested to me that you would be just the man to advise me."

"I shall be pleased to do what I can for you."

"When I retired from active business I sold all my speculative shares, and invested the bulk of my money in real estate, so I would have something to occupy my mind."

"I attend to these matters personally, with the assistance of a young lawyer, who acts as my secretary, and a girl stenographer."

"Both of these persons reside in my house, to which I have affixed a small addition, where I have my office."

The detective was well acquainted with the brown-stone palace of the old-time railroad king, on Fifth avenue, opposite Central Park, which at the time it was built was the talk of New York.

"Now then, before I go any further, let me ask you if you know anything in regard to Spiritualism?" the old gentleman said, in a peculiar, abrupt way.

"Well, I have a fair general knowledge, but I cannot say that I have ever given much time to make a study of the matter."

"Do you consider it all a humbug, and the people who believe in it either dupes or frauds?"

"Oh, no; I will not go so far as that. I will say, though, that Spiritualism does give a chance for frauds to make dupes, but there are many honest, sincere people who believe in it, and there are certainly some things in the religion—I presume it may be called that—which are extremely puzzling."

"I am glad to hear you speak in such a way, for, Mr. Phenix, I must admit to you that Spiritualism seems to me to be nearer the true religion than any of which I have any knowledge."

The detective was surprised by this disclosure, for the old fellow had always borne the reputation of being a man who cared nothing at all for the church.

"It was just by accident that my attention was attracted to this matter," Mr. Lenbold explained. My stenographer, a Miss Holbrooke, who has been with me for about a year now, is a devout believer in this new religion, and just out of curiosity I have attended some of these seances, as they term them, and I have become decidedly impressed with the belief that there is something in the thing, for through the mediums I have received communications, and been told secrets known to no one but myself."

This was the old story which the detective had often heard, and he replied:

"Men who have studied into the matter think it is a sort of mind-reading, and that the spirits themselves have nothing to do with it."

"I do not agree with them!" the old financier protested, in a way which showed he was an earnest believer.

"Now, a strange thing has happened," he continued. "It has been discovered that Miss Holbrooke is a first-class medium, and under certain conditions can perform wonderful things."

"She has taken lessons, and acquired the art of going into the mesmeric sleep, and while in that state I write questions on a slate and she answers them without seeing the writing."

"Yes, I have heard of such things" the detective assented. "Were the answers satisfactory?"

"No, I cannot say they were, for the spirits have made some strange charges against my daughter and my secretary, which I am unwilling to believe, yet some information has been given which has turned out to be wonderfully exact."

"For instance, I asked at random: 'Is there any likelihood of my getting a customer for my Virginia plantation?' That is a thousand-acre place which I was obliged to take, having lent money on it, and as it is in a section where quite a number of Englishmen have settled I advertised in the London Times."

"Yes, I see; a good idea."

"The answer was: 'Yes; there is a light-haired, gray-eyed stranger now on the water

who will probably buy if you manage him rightly.'"

"That was encouraging."

"Yes; I received a letter from a gentleman who signs himself Edmund St. Germaine, saying that he had seen my advertisement in the London Times, and as he was looking for a plantation of the kind, he would wait upon me as soon as he recovered from the effects of his voyage, and in regard to his pecuniary responsibility he referred me to the English consul."

"I have just come from the consul's office and he is personally acquainted with the family although not with this particular party. They have plenty of money; so you see the message was correct. Now, can you explain it?"

"No, sir; I cannot."

"I have just dropped a line to the gentleman inviting him to make my house his home while he remains in the city."

"But I am puzzled about these warnings in regard to my daughter and my secretary," and the old man shook his head gravely.

"I have made up my mind to get at the truth. My daughter has no faith in these spirit-messages, and declares there is something wrong about them."

"She has no suspicion, you understand, Mr. Phenix, that she has been attacked."

The detective nodded.

"Now, then, wouldn't it be a good idea for you to take up your quarters in my house, in some disguise, of course, so that your mission will not be suspected, and examine into these matters?"

"I think that a good idea," the veteran detective replied.

"If there is anything wrong about these messages I want to know it!" Mr. Lenbold declared; "but I cannot bring myself to believe there is," he continued in a tone of firm conviction.

"If the accusations against my daughter, Phyllis, and Mr. Huntington, my secretary, have any foundation in fact, I should be aware of it, but I am incredulous, and you, Mr. Phenix, undoubtedly can get at the truth."

"It is possible," and the detective meditating for a moment, added:

"I think, Mr. Lenbold, this is a game which I had better delegate to one of my assistants. I have a particularly bright young man who will do this espionage work better than I, and, as he is not known in the city there will be no danger of his being recognized."

"I will give him a letter to you, and you can prepare your household for his coming by announcing that he is the son of a friend of your youth who settled in the West."

"He will be provided with plenty of money, and you can rely upon his playing the character of a dashing Westerner to the life."

The millionaire was satisfied with the scheme.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE MAN FROM GUTTENBURG.

INSPECTOR DANIEL GRIMSHAW sat at his desk in the white-fronted building in Mulberry street, where the Metropolitan Police has its headquarters.

He was conversing with Detective Patrick O'Callahan, who bore the reputation of being one of the ablest men on the force. Grimshaw, too, was universally regarded as second in ability only to his official superior, the superintendent, the head of the Department.

Into the office strode a peculiar-looking man.

He was about the medium size, with the odd, oval face common to the men of the Southwest—a man of twenty-five or thirty. An expert judge of character would have immediately set him down as being a "sport."

He was carelessly dressed; wore a flannel lawn-tennis shirt, with a black silk necktie, loosely knotted at the throat, a suit of clothes rather the worse for wear, the pantaloons being of an odd check pattern, and a soft slouch hat was pulled over his brows.

He walked up to the inspector's desk with the air of a man who felt perfectly sure of his welcome.

"I want to see the chief," he announced.



"The superintendent is not in at present, but possibly I will do as well. I am Inspector Grimshaw," the official remarked.

"Ah, yes, I have often read about you in the newspapers," the visitor declared.

"Well, I don't see why you can't attend to the business, for it is in the detective line."

"I certainly can, for that is my department," the inspector declared.

"Do you know anything about a man called William Black, or, as his pals term him, Black Bill?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, I have heard of the man, although I never met him," Grimshaw replied.

"And is he 'wanted'?" the visitor asked, eagerly.

The inspector opened his desk and took out a large memorandum-book.

He turned over a half-dozen pages.

"Ah, here it is!" he exclaimed.

"William Black, *alias* Black Bill, about thirty years old, a little above the medium size, stoutly built, swarthy complexion, short hair, inclined to curl, full black beard, dark eyes, well dressed."

"Yes, that is the man! that ar' is his description to a hair!" the stranger exclaimed.

"Well, sir, he is very much wanted," the inspector declared. "The authorities of Bourbon county, Kentucky, will give a reward of a thousand dollars for his arrest."

"That is for the bank-robbery!" the visitor exclaimed. "I know all about that—I'm from Bourbon county myself, sah."

"The State of Alabama will give two thousand for him on account of the killing of a policeman, who surprised him and his pals as they were breaking into a cotton warehouse in the city of Mobile."

"I don't know anything about that job, but I do know that he is an all-around rascal!" the Kentuckian declared, emphatically.

"And the authorities of the Territory of New Mexico, in conjunction with the Wells-Fargo Express Company, will give five thousand dollars for him," the official continued.

"Was that on account of the train-robbing game?" the visitor asked.

"Yes, he held up a train, killed the Express messenger and got away with twenty thousand dollars in gold."

"Well, now I tell you, sah, that fellow is just about as bad as they make 'em!" the stranger declared.

"Yes, he is apparently as desperate a scoundrel as ever operated in the West, but do you know anything about him?" the inspector asked.

"Oh, yes; as I told you, I am from Bourbon county, Kentucky, myself," the visitor explained.

"My name is Boone—Andrew Jackson Boone, of Salt Lick, in ole Kaintuck, and it was the First National Bank of Salt Lick that this cuss cracked."

"I was living in that burg then so I know all about it."

"I'm a horseman, I am, a trainer, and I am now with White-hat Kilduff, who is trying to earn some winter oats for his horses over at Guttenburg."

The policemen nodded; both knew by reputation the eccentric horse-owner, who had acquired his peculiar nickname because he always wore a broad-brimmed, white slouch hat, winter and summer.

"It was three years ago when I met this Black Bill," the Kentuckian continued.

"I was training then for Colonel Dick Yadkins, at Salt Lick, and was keeping company with about as nice a gal as ever walked on this hyer footstool."

"She had only one fault: she knew she was a regular beauty, and she was a leetle flirty—a leetle foolish about carrying-on with the fellows."

"Well, this hyer Captain William Black, as he called himself, struck the town."

"He was after stock—going to set up a racing-stable—had plenty of money, and flung it around as though he had two or three gold-mines at his back."

"And all this time, mind you, he was laying his plans to crack the bank."

"He got his eyes on my gal, and she, poor little silly thing, was just fool enough to believe that she had got hold of a prince in disguise, and the town woke up one morning to find that both of 'em had disappeared."

"They had run off and got married, as she wrote to her folks."

"A week or so after that the bank was robbed, and, as it happened, the robbers were seen as they rode off with their plunder, and this Captain Black was recognized."

"Then when the regular detectives for Louisville got hold of the case, it came out that Captain Black was a notorious scoundrel who had been concerned in a dozen different games of this kind."

"After that nobody heard anything of the girl for about a year, and then she came back home a wreck—mere skin and bones, to die!"

The voice of the horseman deepened, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Yes, yes, we understand—a very, very sad case," the inspector remarked. "But young girls will do just such foolish things."

"She had been treated in the worst kind of way; she had been married to a scoundrel all right, but after a time she had discovered that he had about a dozen other wives."

"Oh, that is nothing!" the official declared. "Rascals of this kind don't care how many women they deceive, or how many lives they wreck."

"That is Gospel truth! every word of it!" the Kentuckian exclaimed.

"Well, sah, the poor gal lingered along for about a year and then she died."

"After she was buried I stole out to the cemetery one night, and there, kneeling on her grave, I swore that if I ever came across this villain who had ruined her life I would avenge the wrong!"

"It was my idea, sah, you know, to make a personal matter out of it, but when I read in the newspapers about his killing the Express messenger in New Orleans, then I understood that thar wasn't any need of my soiling my hands with the 'tarnel pole-cat."

"All I would have to do would be to hunt him down and give him up to the hangman."

"Yes, that is the game to play, decidedly!" the inspector declared.

"By taking the law in your own hands you would only be apt to get yourself into trouble," Detective O'Callahan observed.

"That is just the way I reckoned, and it would be a heap more satisfaction to me to see the scoundrel with the rope around his neck, than it would be to kill him with my own hand," the Kentuckian declared.

"Yes, I should imagine so," the inspector remarked.

"Well, sah, Captain William Black, *alias* Black Bill, is in New York and I can show you where you can put your hands on him inside of a half an hour."

"We will be glad of the chance to nab the gentleman, and extend the hospitalities of the Tombs to him," Inspector Grimshaw assured in a brisk business-like way.

"I was on a Broadway car coming uptown," the Kentuckian explained. "And when the car came to the Astor House it stopped to let some passengers off and I saw the scoundrel going into the hotel."

"Dressed up to the nines, just as he used to be!"

"Well, sah, you can bet your life I hopped off that ar' car in a lively way, and followed him into the hotel!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### BAGGING THE GAME.

THE inspector and the detective exchanged glances, and it was plain from the look upon their faces that they were a little incredulous in regard to the statement.

"You are quite sure that you have not been deceived in regard to the man?" the inspector asked.

"Sart'in! you can bet your life on it!" the Kentuckian cried impressively.

"Why, gentlemen, I couldn't make a mistake! I would know that man if I met him in the bottomless pit a thousand years hence."

"Of course you are a better judge of the matter than we can possibly be," the inspector affirmed. "But sometimes in an affair of this kind one is deceived by a strong resemblance."

"Oh, yes, I know that a man might make a mistake of that kind, but, as I said, you can bet your bottom dollar that I haven't!" Boone declared.

"I knew the man the minute I clapped eyes on him, although he has changed his appearance considerably."

"His beard is longer and more bushy than it used to be; he is also wearing his hair longer and his complexion is darker."

"I should reckon that he has just come from a long sea voyage to judge from his looks."

"Well, gentlemen, as I had made up my mind to run my game to earth, I knew that the most important thing for me was to keep out of his sight."

"For if he once got a glimpse of my face, the chances were big that he would recognize me, and then all the fat would be in the fire."

"Yes, yes; that is correct!" the inspector agreed.

"So, I took particular care to keep him from seeing me."

"He didn't seem to be afraid that any one was watching him, for he went straight up to his room, and as thar happened to be a raft of people marching up-stairs at the time, I was able to spot him right to his lair."

"He must have had the key in his pocket, for he didn't stop at the hotel office for it, but went right up-stairs."

"Well, under the circumstances, since you are so positive about the matter, I don't think it will do any harm for us to interview this gentleman," the inspector observed.

"Not a bit of harm," O'Callahan assented. "If he isn't the man it will be easy enough to apologize for the intrusion and get out."

"Oh, yes, no trouble about that," said Grimshaw. "And as my curiosity is excited about this matter I think I will go with you, Pat."

"You and I ought to be able to handle the man without any trouble if he is inclined to be ugly," the official added.

"No doubt about that!" the detective assented.

"And if it comes to a skirmish you can count me in," the Kentuckian suggested.

"I wouldn't like anything better than a good chance for a scrap with this scoundrel, even if I had to tackle him single-handed, and it is my impression that though he is a bigger man than I am, yet I would be able to warm him!" the sport continued.

"We will go right down, and possibly, we will succeed in nailing the man before he goes out," the inspector remarked in his brisk way.

Then the three departed.

"We will take the Broadway cars down, and if we bag the bird we can get a coach at the Astor House to bring him up," the inspector remarked.

In due time the three reached the hotel, and they proceeded up-stairs, the Kentuckian in the advance.

The room, to the door of which the sport led the officers, was on the third floor, an inner apartment, whose windows looked upon the central air space.

"This is his room," Boone remarked in a cautious tone as he laid hold of the door-knob.

"Better get all ready for a skirmish, for he has shown that he is a desperate fellow, and may give us a tough fight!" the Kentuckian added.

Inspector Grimshaw had a pair of "bracelets" out, as the man-hunters jocosely term the steel handcuffs, and Detective O'Callahan clicked the cylinder of his revolver around so as to be sure that it was in working order.

The three had ascertained that the key was in the inside of the lock, which would seem to be proof that the wanted man was in the room.

But, just as the Kentuckian was about to turn the knob the door was opened from the inside.

The moment that Boone felt the knob begin to turn, he relinquished his grasp upon it, so when the door opened, the man within was surprised to see three strangers on the threshold staring inquiringly at him.

The inspector had the handcuffs pressed against his side, so they were out of sight, and Detective O'Callahan concealed the revolver under the skirt of his light overcoat.

If the occupant of the room was surprised by the sight of the three, they on their part were fully as astonished at his appearance.



It was not the stoutly-built man with the swarthy complexion and the black beard, as the Kentuckian had described, much to the amazement of all three.

On the contrary, it was a rather tall, slenderly-built, gentlemanly fellow, with short yellow hair, inclined to curl, dark-gray eyes, and a full face, which naturally wore a stolid expression.

He was pressed in one of the odd-looking, "baggy" checked tweed suits, so much worn by the traveling Englishman, and the officers, who were good judges of nationalities, immediately jumped to the conclusion that the stranger was a Briton on his travels.

As the bloodhounds were old hands at the game, the first thought which came to them, when they saw that the occupant of the room did not bear the slightest resemblance to the man of whom they were in search, was that the apparent Englishman was Black Bill in a clever disguise.

But at the second glance they saw that this man was not disguised in any way.

His hair was his own, his complexion the clear red and white of the beef-fed Englishman, and the smoothly-shaven face showed no signs of a heavy beard.

The most astonished man of the three was the Gutenberg sport.

He stared at the occupant of the room in wonder, then craned his neck to look over the shoulder of the Englishman into the room.

The door was widely opened so that the interior of the room was fully visible, but there wasn't any one within the apartment.

Of course there was a chance that the man of whom the three were in search might be concealed in the wardrobe, or under the bed.

"Where is he?" Boone exclaimed, as he gaped into the apartment.

"What the deuce do you mean?" the stranger cried, speaking with a decided English accent.

"Excuse me, sir, we are officers in search of a fugitive from justice, and we were informed that he could be found in this apartment," the inspector explained.

"Oh, yes, I understand, but I think there is some mistake about the matter, don't you know?" the Englishman remarked.

"This is my room, and there hasn't anyone been in it to my knowledge but myself."

"Permit me to give you my card," he added as he tendered the bit of pasteboard.

"Edmund St. Germaine," said the inspector, reading aloud the name on the card.

"That is my name, sir, and I only arrived in this country yesterday afternoon by the steamer City of Paris, and I assure you, sir, that I am not a fugitive from justice, as you put it," the Englishman remarked, evidently both embarrassed and indignant.

"Oh, no, you are not the man we are after!" Inspector Grimshaw declared, immediately. "A different party entirely, but we were informed that he was seen to enter this room."

"Well, that may be possible, for I have been out all the morning, but you are quite welcome to search, gentlemen, although I am sure you will only have your labor for your pains."

"By gum!" exclaimed the Kentuckian, "if this don't beat my time I don't want a cent!"

"Perhaps you may have made some mistake in regard to the room," the inspector suggested.

"Not by a jugful!" Boone replied in the most decided manner. "This is the room that the cuss entered, and there isn't any two ways about it! He unlocked the door, and walked in just as if he owned the hull house."

"It certainly is very strange," the Englishman observed. "But pray search the room, gentlemen, so as to satisfy yourselves."

The inspection was made but it was without results.

The three apologized to the Englishman for putting him to so much trouble and departed.

"He has fooled me this time!" the Kentuckian remarked as the three descended the stairs. "But Black Bill is in New York, and you can bet your life that I will get him yet."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE WESTERNER.

As the retired railroad king explained to the detective, he had his offices in an addition which was built on to his elaborate brown-stone palace.

The business apartments were on the level of the street, and consisted of an outer apartment, where Mr. Ralph Huntington, the good-looking, dark-eyed, dark-haired young lawyer, who acted as secretary and confidential man of business to the old gentleman, and Miss Ramie Holbrooke, the blue-eyed, blonde-haired stenographer, had their desks.

The inner room was Mr. Lenbold's private office, to which no one was ever admitted until they had been subjected to a cross-examination by the young lawyer in regard to their business.

It was on the morning after the one on which occurred the events related in our last chapter. Mr. Lenbold was in his office, looking over the letters just delivered by the postman.

As we stated, in describing the man, after retiring from an active business life, he invested a large amount of his great wealth in real estate, and owned over a hundred houses in New York, ranging from the palatial business buildings down-town to the elaborate French flat houses in the upper wards of the metropolis. He did not choose to put his real estate matters in the hands of an agent, so there was ample work to occupy his time.

Mr. Lenbold finished the examination of his mail, penciled his instructions upon the letters, then turned them over to the lawyer and Miss Holbrooke.

This done he retreated to his office and took up one of the morning newspapers.

He had hardly got interest in the journal, though, when a rather peculiarly dressed young man made his appearance in the outer office and inquired for Mr. Lenbold.

The new-comer was a trifle under the medium size, but his well-knit form gave promise of considerable muscular strength.

He was a good-looking young fellow, apparently not much over twenty years of age, for his chin showed no trace of a beard, and there was only a faint line of down upon his upper lip.

His features were a little irregular, but clearly-cut, and wore a good-natured expression.

His eyes were a bluish-gray, keen and quick, and his short, yellow hair curled in little crispy ringlets all over his head.

He was nicely dressed in a dark business suit, and wore a light and rather broad-brimmed soft-felt hat, canted in a raking manner back from his forehead; the young man's whole appearance was such that at the first glance a good judge of men would have set him down for being from the "land of the setting sun," to use the hyperbole of the free-spoken Westerner, a son of the great prairies of the Far West.

"Is Mr. Lenbold in?" the young man inquired, speaking with a singular musical and well-modulated voice.

"He is, sir," Huntington replied.

And then, before the young lawyer could ask in regard to the stranger's business, the young man produced a letter and said:

"Will you have the kindness to give this to him?"

"Certainly!" replied Huntington. "Take a chair, sir."

"Thank you," responded the stranger, helping himself to a seat while the lawyer carried the letter in to Mr. Lenbold.

"Ah, yes! my young friend from the West, Sidney Freemont," the millionaire exclaimed after he perused the letter.

"Ask him to walk in, please. He is a wealthy young fellow, who is ambitious to show the New Yorkers that he is an uncommonly sharp business man, and as his father did me a good turn many years ago when I was in a condition to need help, I don't mind doing what I can for the son," Lenbold explained.

"Ah, yes, I see; very natural under the circumstances," Huntington remarked.

This was what the young lawyer said, but his thoughts, which he did not put into words, were vastly different.

As Huntington had been with the millionaire for a couple of years, he was well-acquainted with his peculiarities, and knew

that Lenbold was a man who did not know the meaning of the word *gratitude*.

Hard-headed, and hard-hearted, he thought only of care of *himself*, and if he was disposed to be friendly with the young stranger, it was because he expected to make something out of him.

"Mr. Lenbold will be glad to see you in his office," the secretary announced.

"Thanks!" responded the Westerner, and as the young man made his way to the inner apartment, the thought came to Huntington, as he noticed the frank and open countenance of the stranger:

"Ah, my dear young man from the great and glorious West, you may think you know a thing or two, and are up to tricks that are vain, but when you come to measure wits with old Solomon Lenbold you will speedily discover that you are not in the game any more than the blue-bottle fly struggling in the web of the spider," the young lawyer mused as he returned to his desk.

The millionaire could be very affable and agreeable when he liked, and on this occasion he greeted the young man in the warmest manner.

He rose and shook hands with him, as the Westerner entered, hastened to place a chair, and invited his guest to be seated.

The door was ajar, so the two in the outer office could hear what was said.

"My dear Mr. Freemont, I am delighted beyond measure to see you!" the millionaire declared. "Your father was one of my oldest friends, and though circumstances kept us apart during the last few years of his life, yet we always cherished the warmest regard for each other."

"Yes, father told me before he died that if I ever came to New York I must not fail to call upon you," the Westerner remarked.

"Ah, yes; he knew that I would treat you just the same as if you were my own son."

"Where are you staying, by the way?" the old man asked, abruptly.

"I went to the Grand Union, right opposite the depot. Being a stranger in New York I didn't exactly know where to go, and so I pitched on the first hotel that I saw."

"But, my dear fellow, you cannot stop at any hotel while I have a house in New York, you know!" the millionaire exclaimed; "you must take up your quarters with me while you remain the city."

"Thank you; I would be very much pleased indeed to do so, if it suits your convenience and pleasure."

"Which it does; so I will have your baggage sent for, and will try to make your visit an agreeable one, and if you need any advice in regard to your own private affairs do not hesitate to ask me."

"I am not in actual business life now," he continued. "But I keep in touch with the market, and you can rest assured that I know what is going on."

"I am very much obliged indeed, and I shall be glad to avail myself of your kind offices, for I propose to invest quite a sum of money."

"Father's speculation in the Omaha's lots proved to be a regular bonanza, and cleared up over a hundred thousand dollars."

"Ah, yes; well, I am glad to hear it, and if you want to take a little flyer here in New York, I do not doubt but what I can find you something good to put your money in."

"Ah it is just as I expected," Huntington murmured to himself. "Although the old fellow has retired from active business life, yet he can't resist the temptation to shear a lamb of this kind if the opportunity comes in his way."

At this moment a stranger entered the apartment—a tall, thin man, well in years, with a long face, the chin covered with a short black beard.

The man was dressed in a well-worn black suit, and had a clerical appearance, looking like a school-teacher or a minister.

Under his arm he carried a small parcel neatly wrapped in white paper, apparently a couple of books.

"Mr. Lenbold?" said the stranger, with a glance through the open door into the inner office, where the millionaire could be plainly seen.

"Ah, there he is!" the man continued, before the young lawyer could reply.

"I come by appointment, bringing some



books which he ordered," he added, and then the man marched into the inner room, closing the door after him.

Huntington nodded assent as the man passed, completely deceived by the statement.

The millionaire stared in surprise as the stranger marched into his office in this unceremonious manner.

"Lenbold, you are condemned to die, and I am your executioner!" the man cried. "Down on your knees and pray, while I, with this dynamite, send all our souls to judgment!"

And as he spoke he raised the paper parcel high in the air.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### WHO WAS HE?

THE startling words were hissed by the man with intense earnestness.

That the fellow was a desperate crank whose disordered mind had conceived the idea that he had been chosen by Heaven to execute the decrees of fate upon the millionaire was at once apparent.

There was nothing of the hero in Solomon Lenbold. He was brave and desperate enough when it came to a great business transaction. He could face the probable loss of half a million of dollars with an undaunted front, but when it came to a personal affair he was a coward at heart.

And on the present occasion, when the threatening words of the desperate crank reached his ears he was fairly paralyzed with fear, sitting motionless in his chair as if he had suddenly been turned into a statue.

But the young Westerner was made of different stuff.

The crank was quick in his actions but the Westerner quicker still.

With lightning-like celerity he bounded from his seat and sprung upon the stranger.

If the crank had not paused to announce that he was a messenger of vengeance he might have accomplished his task and hurled all within the room to destruction, himself included; but the slight delay was fatal to his plan, for it enabled the young man to catch the parcel containing the dynamite as it descended!

And Freemont sprang forward with such vigor that, as he grabbed the parcel, he came in contact with the crank and sent him backward against the wall.

The man uttered a howl of rage, frenzied to madness by the failure of his diabolical scheme, and sprang forward with outstretched hands, eager to clutch the interloper who had baffled his vengeance.

But, the young Westerner was not caught unprepared. He quickly shifted the parcel to his left hand, and, as the desperate man rushed upon him, waited until he got within a certain distance, then his right fist shot out, almost with the force and precision of a steam hammer, and the blow, landing on the point of the crank's jaw, felled him as if he had been shot.

Down he went, all in a heap.

The crank was "knocked out."

As soon as he saw that he had "settled" his man the Westerner hastened to place the parcel containing the dread explosive in a safe place.

By this time Huntington was in the room. He had presence of mind enough to ring the call of the district telegraph for a policeman.

"Great Heavens! what an escape!" the millionaire cried, drawing a long breath.

He was as white as a sheet, and trembling in every limb.

"What is the matter?" Huntington demanded.

"Have you got a rope, or any strong cord so I can secure the fellow before he recovers his senses?" the Westerner asked, in a business-like way.

"He will be all right again in a few moments, and if we don't tie him the chances are great that there will be more trouble, for the man is evidently a lunatic," Freemont continued.

Miss Holbrooke was standing in the doorway, looking with curious eyes upon the scene.

As the crank had taken the precaution to close the door, neither the young lawyer nor the girl knew exactly what had occurred, but the noise of the struggle, following the

sound of the loud voices of the men, had made them conscious that something was wrong.

"I have some strong cord which came on an Express parcel!" the girl exclaimed.

"That will do nicely!" Freemont remarked.

Miss Holbrooke hastened to get the cord, and Huntington happening to glance through the front window saw a couple of policemen sauntering by.

The lawyer summoned them immediately.

As it happened, one of the officers was the captain of the precinct, who, of course, knew the millionaire, and was anxious to oblige him.

By the time the policemen entered the office the Westerner had the crank's wrists securely bound with the stout Express cord, and the man was beginning to show signs of returning consciousness.

Lenbold had recovered his composure, although he was still pale, and explained to the officers what had occurred.

"A desperate crank indeed!" the police captain exclaimed. "Do you know the man?"

"No, I never saw him before in my life!" the millionaire averred.

"Oh, then it isn't a man with a personal grudge against you?" the police captain inferred.

"No, not at all. The fellow is a total stranger!" Lenbold replied.

"He must have gone for you then on general principles," the officer suggested.

"There are a lot of these cranks running around the city," he continued. "Men who have had such a run of ill-luck that it has turned their heads, and they get in such a state of mind that they think all the people who have been fortunate enough to make a little money are nothing but a lot of robbers who ought to be killed."

"Yes, yes, that is very true," the millionaire assented.

"Of course, I have not been exempt from the annoyance that these cranks cause; I have had my share," Lenbold added; "but I never happened to encounter a bloodthirsty ruffian like this man before, and if it had not been for the quickness of this gentleman," and he nodded to the Westerner, "none of us would probably be alive at this moment."

"Well, as it happened I noticed the man's eyes as he came in and saw from their expression that he wasn't exactly right in the upper story, so I kept watch on him, and was in a measure prepared for trouble; but, for all that, the fellow was so quick that I had all I could do to thwart him."

By this time the stranger had fully recovered; the officers assisted him to his feet, then they proceeded to search him, and found he was armed with a six-shooter, which had a ball cartridge in each of the cylinder chambers, but the man was without money and had no letters or papers on his person to show who he was.

"This looks pretty bad," the captain remarked, after ascertaining that the revolver was fully loaded.

"Now, my man, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"Nothing," he responded, doggedly.

"You are in an ugly scrape here and it will undoubtedly go hard with you," the captain declared.

"I will say, though, that I am sorry that my scheme failed!" the stranger exclaimed, abruptly. "But it is evident that your time, Lenbold, has not yet come; there is no doubt in my mind, however, that when the proper moment comes I shall not have any difficulty in executing the vengeance of an outraged Heaven upon you."

The police captain looked at the millionaire and then tapped the side of his head with his forefinger in a significant manner.

"Well, I don't think there is much use of wasting time in talking to you," the officer observed.

"So we will take you off to the station. You will appear against him, Mr. Lenbold?"

"Oh, yes, most decidedly!" the millionaire exclaimed. "For even if I did not have a personal interest in this matter I should consider it a duty I owed to society to do all I could to have a dangerous crank of this kind put where he couldn't do any harm."

"If you can spare the time I will take him

right down to the Tombs now. Judge McGruder will be holding court, and the thing can be put right through," the captain suggested.

"A very good idea indeed, and I fully approve of it," the millionaire replied.

"Mr. Freemont, I presume that you will not have any objection to going with me?"

"I shall be glad to accompany you," the Westerner replied.

"But I fancy from what I have seen of this man that it is a case where a lunatic asylum is more nearly concerned than a prison," the young man added.

"Oh, yes; I understand what you mean!" the stranger exclaimed in an angry tone.

"You think I am mad because I was willing to sacrifice my own life to rid the world of a wretch like this craven-hearted, white-livered robber, who has coolly and deliberately ruined thousands of men that he might rise to wealth."

"He is above the law!" the man continued, wildly. "For his money he corrupts judges and jurors. He has for years gone on in his career of guilt, and the foul worldlings grovel at his feet because of his ill-gotten gains; but the end is near, and all his millions will not save him!"

Lenbold was evidently uncomfortable as he listened to the heated words of the crank, although he affected an air of indifference.

A coach was procured, and soon the party were on their way to the famous city prison of the metropolis.

Judge McGruder, one of the oldest police magistrates in the city, was on the bench, and had just come to the end of the "morning watch" when the party arrived.

The judge and the millionaire were old acquaintances, and when McGruder learned the particulars of the case he had the prisoner arraigned at once.

The parcel so carefully done up in the white paper was examined and found to contain dynamite enough to blow up a house.

"This is a very serious case," the judge declared with a grave shake of the head.

"What is your name?" he demanded.

"I haven't any," replied the prisoner, perfectly cool and collected.

"Come, come, my man, this is all nonsense, you know!" the judge exclaimed, impatiently; "you do not benefit yourself by trying any game of this kind."

"I am not trying to play any game," the prisoner protested. "What I tell you is the truth. I haven't any name. Call me Mr. Nobody, if you like."

The judge frowned, and then looked inquiringly at the millionaire.

"I do not know the man, your Honor," Lenbold remarked. "To my knowledge I never saw him before in my life, and I know of no reason why he should wish to harm me, for most assuredly I have never had anything to do with him."

At this point one of the criminal lawyers, who practiced in this court chiefly and who had been studying the face of the prisoner in an attentive manner, arose and said:

"Your Honor, I think I can give you a little information about this man. If I am not mistaken, his name is Jabez Londown, and he was arraigned in this court before Judge Duffy about five years ago, for an attempt to kill his partner, a German with whom he conducted a small saloon in Avenue A."

"It was one of the places where these foreigners meet to spout anarchy and socialism, and it was proved on the trial that this man had become a regular crank on the subject; his partner inherited a small fortune from somebody in Germany, and because he wasn't willing to turn it all over to the society to which the pair belonged, this man tried to kill the other, but on the trial it was proved that his head was affected and he was taken to the lunatic asylum."

"Are you the man?" the judge asked.

"I am not going back to that asylum!" the prisoner exclaimed. "They are a set of brutes there, but they couldn't keep me, and I will not go back!"

"I will have an examination made in regard to his condition," the judge remarked to the millionaire. "But I don't think there is any doubt about the matter."

"I agree with your Honor," Lenbold replied.



The prisoner was removed, and the millionaire, with the Westerner, returned to his house.

On the way Mr. Lenbold took occasion to warmly thank Freemont for the presence of mind and quickness which he had displayed, saying that he considered that he owed his life to him.

"Don't mention it, my dear sir!" the young man exclaimed. "We were both in the same boat! If that dynamite had ever exploded there wouldn't have been much left of either of us."

The millionaire shivered.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER.

WHEN the millionaire and his guest arrived at Mr. Lenbold's office, the financier found a gentleman waiting there for him.

It was the Englishman Edmund St. Germaine who had such a peculiar experience with the two police officers and the sport from Guttenburg as detailed in a previous chapter.

Mr. Lenbold, upon receiving word from the Englishman, that he had arrived, had sent him an invitation to take up his abode with him while he remained in New York.

Lenbold was very anxious to get rid of the Virginia plantation, which he had been obliged to take by foreclosure.

The place had cost him less than ten thousand dollars, and he thought that if he played his cards rightly he would be able to sell it to the Briton for about twenty thousand.

It was a strange fact about the old man, that though he was worth from ten to twenty millions of dollars—no one knew exactly how much wealth he had—yet he was just as anxious to make money as he had ever been and was reported to drive a harder bargain than in his younger days when he hadn't acquired a tenth part of his fortune.

He took it for granted that the Englishman, being the scion of an old and wealthy family, was not likely to be a particularly sharp business man, and it was his idea that there ought not to be much trouble in making the deal.

So the old gentleman greeted Mr. St. Germaine in the warmest manner, introduced him to the Westerner, and explained what a narrow escape they had had from becoming the victims of the crank.

The Englishman expressed his wonder at the narrow escape.

"It doesn't matter much though as long as you didn't suffer any damage," St. Germaine said in conclusion.

"There is an old saying, don't you know, and it is a remarkably true one too, to my thinking, that a miss is as good as a mile."

"Yes, yes, very correct, no doubt," the millionaire observed. "But if I am allowed to have anything to say in such a case as this, I most decidedly would prefer that a crank of this kind should keep a mile off rather than meet him in the narrow confines of a room."

Then both of the others laughed, for this observation struck them as being decidedly funny, but the millionaire did not intend to be humorous.

"You may laugh, gentlemen, but I tell you it is a mighty serious bit of business!" Lenbold declared.

Both of the others immediately assented to this.

"And the worst of the matter is there is a strong probability that the man will not be punished in any way for this really fiendish attempt upon my life," Lenbold complained.

"If the examination proves that he is insane, he will be sent back to the asylum, from which he has evidently escaped," the millionaire continued.

"Oh, yes, that is what will be done with him undoubtedly," the Westerner remarked.

"That will not give me much satisfaction, for there is no telling how soon the rascal may break out again, and as soon as he gains his liberty I am in danger of being attacked," the old gentleman declared.

"It was partly my fault," Huntington admitted. "I ought not to have allowed the man to enter the room, but he displayed the proverbial cunning of the insane and worked the trick in such a way that I felt perfectly

sure he was some man from whom you had ordered books."

"Well, you were a little remiss about the matter," Lenbold observed. "Still, under the circumstances, I do not doubt that if I had been in your place I would have done just the same, for the fellow certainly displayed most wonderful cunning."

"I will be on my guard in the future though!" the young lawyer exclaimed. "And the next crank who comes here with the idea of trying a game of this kind will have to be a deuced sight smarter than this one was to get past me."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the millionaire's only child, his daughter, Phyllis.

In appearance, the daughter bore a strong resemblance to the father.

She was small in stature, stoutly built, and had the dark complexion of her sire, together with his black eyes and hair.

She was not a handsome girl, for her features were irregular, her mouth being too large and her nose too small, but she had a pleasant expression, and an agreeable way with her; it was the common remark among her friends that Phyllis Lenbold was one of the girls who improved wonderfully upon acquaintance.

She was beautifully dressed, although all in dark colors, and with very little jewelry visible.

The daughter was like the father; neither one cared for display.

Mr. Lenbold introduced the two gentlemen, and explained that they were going to be his guests for a while.

The young lady expressed her pleasure in a few well-chosen words, and then remarked to her father that she was going to drive to the sales-stables where Mr. Lenbold usually purchased his horses, as the proprietor had sent word that he had a saddle-horse which he thought would just suit her.

"And if you can spare Mr. Huntington for an hour or so I wish you would let him accompany me, papa," she said in conclusion.

"He knows a great deal more about a horse than I do, and it isn't always safe to place too much faith in the statements of these gentlemen who have horses to sell."

"Ah, yes, you are quite right there, don't you know, Miss Lenbold," the Englishman remarked.

"It is an old joke, don't you see, that even a parson will sometimes depart from the truth when it comes to selling a horse that he doesn't want," Mr. St. Germaine continued.

"Certainly I can spare Mr. Huntington," the father answered.

"And bear in mind, Phyllis, that no matter what the man asks you for the horse the chances are that he has put on from fifty to a hundred dollars extra," the old gentleman added, with all the caution of the born trader.

"Oh, yes, I understand that, papa, and even if the horse suits me I shall not be in a hurry to conclude the bargain."

"That is right!" the old gentleman declared, approvingly.

"I am a good judge of a horse's value, and you can depend upon it that I can tell pretty closely what the beast is worth," Huntington remarked.

Then the two entered the coupe, which was at the door, and set out on their quest.

"You must allow me to compliment you upon the appearance of your daughter, Mr. Lenbold," the Englishman remarked after the pair had departed.

"She is really one of the most intelligent and lady-like girls that I have ever encountered."

A gratified look appeared on the face of the millionaire.

Praise of his daughter was as sweet incense to him.

The world believed that Solomon Lenbold was a hard man.

He had never been known to show much mercy to anybody who was unfortunate enough to get into his power.

But those who knew him best said there was one soft spot in his heart.

He loved his daughter—his only child—and always did all in his power to make her happy.

Lenbold was a "close" man, as the ex-

pression is, and, notwithstanding all his millions, kept a careful account of all his expenditures.

Phyllis was now twenty-three years old; her mother had died when she was eighteen, and until after the mother's death the millionaire had lived in a modest brick house in the neighborhood of Washington Square.

The millionaire's wife was a plain, domestic sort of woman, who shrunk from society, although there were plenty of the Upper Ten of the great metropolis who would have been glad to open their doors to the great railway king.

But after the wife's death, the idea came to the millionaire that on account of his daughter he ought to live in a little better manner.

Then too, just at this time the "great operator" was engaged in an exciting struggle in the stock market, and his enemies circulated a report that Lenbold was in difficulties, and would soon be forced to the wall.

In order to show the world that this rumor was a baseless one, the millionaire proceeded to erect a brown stone palace fit for a king. After it was done he commenced to live in a style appropriate to his wealth, and introduced his daughter to society, where, on account of her father's money, she was made much of by a certain class.

"I am pleased to hear you say that," the father observed. "But although Phyllis is not a beauty, I would rather by far have her as she is, than to be a mere wax-doll without anything to commend her excepting a pretty face."

"I presume that, gentlemen, Mr. Huntington is to be the happy man who will be master of your daughter's hand one of these days, and he certainly seems to be a fine, manly sort of a fellow, don't you know," St. Germaine remarked.

A look of surprise appeared on the face of the millionaire, while the Westerner, although apparently occupied in gazing out of the window, studying the procession of handsome teams moving up and down the avenue, yet in reality had his keen eyes covertly on the two.

"Oh, no, that gentleman is not her affianced husband," Lenbold declared, evidently annoyed by the supposition.

"Ah! have I made a mistake? I beg ten thousand pardons!" the Englishman exclaimed.

"Yes, you are entirely wrong," the millionaire responded.

"That gentleman, Mr. Huntington, is my secretary, and confidential man of business."

"Ah, I see, I comprehend the situation now!" Mr. St. Germaine remarked.

"My daughter wished him to go with her to look at the horse, because she had faith in his judgment, and he is used to attending to all purchases of the kind, but there is no love affair between them."

"Such a thing is out of the question," the old gentleman continued.

"Mr. Huntington is a smart young man, but his family doesn't amount to anything, and he hasn't any money; so an alliance between him and my daughter is out of the question."

"In fact, I do not believe such an idea ever entered the heads of either one of them," he said in conclusion, plainly displeased.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SPORT TURNS INTO A BLOODHOUND.

THE Kentuckian was so positive that he had seen Black Bill enter some room in the neighborhood of the one which the Englishman occupied that the pair came to the conclusion it would be a good idea to see the hotel people, and from them learn if anybody answering to the description of the noted Western desperado had sought quarters in the hotel.

"I may have made a mistake about the room," the Kentuckian admitted. "Although I will be hanged if I see how I could have done it, for I took particular pains to look at the number after he went in."

"Still I am not one of the dogmatic fools who swear that they couldn't make a mistake, and are always so dead certain about everything," he continued.

"During my life I have made plenty of mistakes, and have felt certain about things which afterward turned out to be not so."



"There are mighty few men who wouldn't have to make an admission of that kind if they confined themselves to the truth," the inspector remarked.

As it happened the proprietor of the hotel was an old acquaintance of Inspector Grimshaw, and when the official explained to him what was wanted the gentleman did his best to aid them.

The register was examined, and the clerks questioned, but not the slightest information was gained. No guest at all resembling the description given of Black Bill had come to the hotel.

The three took their departure completely baffled.

The Kentuckian took the defeat very much to heart.

"Well, gentlemen, all I have got to say is that this beats blazes!" he declared.

"I saw the man—there are no two ways about that—and I would be willing to swear to it on a stack of Bibles as big as a house!"

"If you *did* see him he has probably gone into the sneak-thief line, and was prowling around the hotel seeing what he could pick up," the inspector remarked.

"But it is a mighty strange thing, you know," Grimshaw continued. "For a man of the Black Bill stamp would never go into little mean, low sneak-thieving business unless he was so awfully down on his luck that he actually had to do it."

"The man was well-dressed and he didn't have the appearance of being hard-up," Boone remarked.

"Well, I don't know what to make of it!" the inspector declared.

"Gentlemen, as far as this thing goes, I can tell you, right now, that I have enlisted for the war, and you can bet your life that I am going to see it through!" the Kentuckian averred, in a tone of firm determination.

"This man is in New York and I am going to hunt him down," he continued.

"It is a little out of my line, this man-hunting business," he added in a thoughtful way. "And if you gentlemen can give me any points which will be apt to help me, I will be mighty glad to get them."

The inspector, having formed a very favorable opinion of the blunt and out-spoken Kentuckian, was disposed to do all he could for him.

"Well, in the first place, you might do a little shadow business around this hotel," the official suggested. "For if the man is up to any game in this quarter he will be certain to put in an appearance here."

"That is reasonable!" Boone exclaimed.

"Then get in with the crooks," the inspector advised.

"The men who lead crooked lives are like the fellows in other trades, they naturally seek each other's society, and there are quite a number of saloons in the city where the crooks hang out, and when we want to get at a man, and don't know where he is, we send a stool-pigeon to these saloons to pump the 'gang.'"

"Ah, yes, I understand!" Boone exclaimed.

"Although this Black Bill is a stranger to New York, for he has never done any work in this neighborhood, yet the odds are great that if he is in the city he has got in the habit of frequenting some of these crooked saloons."

"You have hit the bull's-eye right plum in the center, I reckon!" the Kentuckian exclaimed.

"I have never done any work of this kind but it is my notion that it will not be hard pulling for me to get into the traces."

"You see, I know quite a number of men who are not any better than they ought to be," he exclaimed.

"I have been connected with the turf ever since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, and some of the fellows who hang around racing stables and tracks are mighty bad eggs."

The other nodded assent.

"So it happens that I am on familiar terms with fellows who don't hesitate to turn their hands to crooked work when they can't make money in an honest way."

"And, come to think of it, I know a man who will be apt to be just the fellow to put me up to the time of day!" Boone exclaimed, abruptly.

"That is the man you want!" the inspector observed.

"He keeps a pool-room and saloon on Sixth avenue," the sport explained.

"About twenty years ago he ran a saloon in Lexington, Kentucky; I was a youngster running around the town at the time, and it was said then that he was mixed up in crooked work."

"He got into trouble and had to take French leave between two days, as the saying is, and I never knew what became of the man until I came here to Guttenburg, then, when I came to New York with some of the boys I happened to go into his place."

"I recognized the man at once, although he has changed a good deal since I saw him in Lexington, and he goes by a different name now."

"I know the man you mean," the inspector declared with a significant nod. "And you are quite right about his place being the resort of crooked characters, although I have an idea that he doesn't do any crooked work himself, nor allow any to be done in his place; but it is a regular house of call for thieves."

"The inspector is right about that," Detective O'Callahan remarked.

"The man has been running about a year now, and although the gang which hangs out around his saloon is as tough a one as there is in the city, yet there have never been any complaints of anybody being damaged in his place."

"He bears the reputation of being a mighty dangerous man," the inspector observed. "And the toughest of these crooks are afraid of him."

"He is handy with his weapons, and if he gets into a row would think nothing of putting a knife into a fellow, or boring a hole through him with a 'gun,'" the police chief continued.

"You couldn't strike a better man in New York to get information out of, if he will only give it; but I am afraid you will have trouble in getting him to talk."

And the inspector shook his head dubiously.

"Well, it will not do any harm for me to try it on," the Kentuckian replied.

"Oh, no, certainly not; and if there is anything that I can do for you, don't hesitate to call upon me, for I will be glad to do anything I can to help you," the inspector declared.

Boone thanked the officer for his offer, and then the three parted, the policeman going up-town, while the Kentuckian went back to Guttenburg.

He had an idea that he might find his man on the race-track, but after he reached the spot and made inquiries, he found the veteran sport had not paid his accustomed visit to the grounds.

As Boone had some work which required his attention, he determined to wait until night before he went to the city in quest of his man.

The time passed away rapidly enough, and after supper the Kentuckian prepared for his trip.

"As I am going in among the sports I suppose I ought to dress myself up a little," he soliloquized.

So, acting on this idea, he put on his best black coat and pantaloons, a white vest, and a silk hat, with a broad band, which was a "back number," being decidedly out of style, but as Boone was a careless sort of fellow, who paid very little heed to the decrees of fashion, this circumstance did not trouble him.

It was a little after eight o'clock when he entered the saloon on Sixth avenue and inquired for the proprietor.

The barkeepers knew who he was, and thinking that he had probably come to give the keeper of the pool-room a "tip" about racing matters, immediately communicated with the proprietor, who was in his private room up-stairs.

And he, at once jumping to the same conclusion to which the barkeepers had arrived, directed that the Kentuckian be invited to walk up-stairs.

Soon the sport was in the sanctum of the pool-room-keeper, which was a cozy apartment, adorned with sporting pictures, and on one of the walls a pair of fencing-folks

were crossed, with a couple of boxing-gloves suspended in the center.

A square table was in the middle of the apartment, and upon the table was a decanter of wine and some cigars.

The pool-room-keeper was a man of fifty, who did not look his age though, for his glossy hair and beard hardly showed a trace of silver.

He had just come in, and still wore his soft felt hat, while his eyes were shielded by a pair of light blue goggles.

"Take a chair—help yourself to a cigar, and have a glass of wine!" the host exclaimed, filling out the liquid.

"Thanks!" responded the Kentuckian, taking a chair, lighting a cigar, and then as he puffed out a cloud of smoke, he observed:

"You have changed a good deal since you left Lexington, Hen Marcello!"

The other started as if he had received an electric shock, then the old sport leaped to his feet, whipped out a revolver, while his eyes glared with anger as he threatened the visitor with the pistol.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GETTING ON THE TRACK.

THE veteran had been so taken by surprise that he completely lost his presence of mind for the moment.

The Kentuckian, though, never winced, but looked as calmly on the frowning tube of the leveled revolver as though it was a harmless pop-gun.

"Oh, come, now, go slow, old man!" he remarked in the most indifferent manner.

"There isn't any need of your trying any monkey business of this kind, for I am not going to do you any harm."

"I used to live in Lexington—was raised there, in fact, and so I knew you mighty well by sight in the old time when you used to run a saloon there on the next block to the Phenix Hotel; but you have changed considerably—letting your hair grow long and raising a beard, makes a big difference, I can tell you."

"Why, I couldn't really place you when I ran across you hyer in New York, although I felt sure that I had met you some time ago somewhar."

"The other day, though, it flashed on me all of a sudden, and I said to myself, said I, 'If this man who now calls himself Homer Blodget ain't the Hen Marcello who used to run the Belle of Nelson saloon in Lexington, Kentucky, about twenty years ago, then I don't want a cent!'"

The old sport hesitated, a shade of indecision on his face, and then he slowly lowered the revolver.

"What do you want of me, anyway?" he demanded in a voice full of suspicion.

"Well, nothing in particular—nothing to speak of. I just thought I would come and talk over old times with you, seeing that you are from the same State as myself," the turfman observed in his easy, good-natured way.

"You have made a mistake in regard to that," the other answered, returning his pistol to its pocket. "I am not the man you think I am."

"Oh, is that so?" Boone asked in a quizzical tone.

"Yes; Homer Blodget is my name."

"Oh, come down, old man?" the Kentuckian exclaimed. "What is the use of your trying to stuff me with any yarn of that kind? Don't you know that you are merely wasting your breath? Homer Blodget in a horn!"

"If you are *not* Hen Marcello, why did you get so deuced excited and snatch out your pistol, as if you were afraid I was going to murder you, when I pronounced your name?"

"Oh, that was from nervousness," the old sport explained. "You see, the fact is, I have a severe attack of the chills and I have dosed myself with quinine until my nerves are all unstrung, so when you sprung that little surprise party on me I pulled out my gun without really knowing what I was doing."

"Say, old man, I don't want to doubt your word, you know," Boone averred, shaking his head, while he grinned in the face of the other. "'Tisn't quite the cheese for a fellow to come into a man's house and



then insinuate that he isn't putting up a square deal, but in this case I have got to differ with you, for I know that you are the man I take you to be just as well as I know that I am myself.

"Oh, by the way, it has just come to me!" the turfman exclaimed, abruptly. "I know why you are so anxious to make me think I have made a mistake! You had trouble in Lexington, didn't you, hey? And you laid your man out in a first-class manner, too."

"I remember all about it now," he went on, cheerily, "and the man has five grown-up sons, fellows who are noted for being bad men when they get on the war-path, so it is big odds that if they went gunning for a man about your size, some one of the boys would be pretty sart'in to get you."

A nervous expression appeared on the face of the old sport, and it was only by a great effort that he managed to appear unconcerned when he spoke.

"You are talking in riddles," he responded. "I never was in Lexington, Kentucky, in my life, but if you insist that I am this Marcello, and are obstinate about the matter, it will hardly be worth my while to attempt to contradict you."

"Oh, that is all right!" Boone declared, with an assuring nod. "When I first spoke, I wasn't thinking about that little trouble of yours; but now that I recall the circumstance I don't blame you for wanting to keep shady," and the Kentuckian seemed quite at his ease.

"But you need not worry a mite as far as I am concerned, for you can rest assured that I will not let on to a single soul that I ever saw you in Kentucky in my life. You can put all the money you want to on that, and you will win every time!"

The old sport looked decidedly relieved at this announcement.

"Men will make mistakes about matters of this kind, no matter how careful they may be," Blodget observed.

"Oh, yes, that is correct. But you can rely upon my keeping my mouth shut," Boone affirmed.

"You have always treated me well, and there isn't any reason why I should want to make trouble for you."

"Our relations have always been pleasant," the old sport observed. "And I am sure that I would be pleased to do anything I can for you."

"I am glad to hear that, for I have got a chance to make a stake, and I think you can help me a little if you will."

"Certainly! What is it?"

"Well, it is a little job which I think I can work if I can get a good man to do certain things."

"The job is a little off-color, you understand," the Kentuckian explained. "And the man must not be too particular."

"Ah, yes I see," and the old sport winked in a significant way.

"I am prepared to pay a good price, but I must have a first-class man, and I would like to have the thing arranged so I wouldn't come in contact with the party."

"I comprehend; you don't want to be known in the matter."

"Exactly! My idea is to remain in the background and pull the wires."

"I think the thing can be arranged all right."

"The reason why I thought I would speak to you about the matter was because I heard that quite a number of men who have been mixed up in crooked business were in the habit of coming into your place, and it struck me that it was probable you might know some man who would do the work for me."

"Oh, yes; I don't think there is any doubt about it," the old sport declared.

"My place has become a sort of headquarters for men who are not exactly on the square," Blodget continued.

"I have got half a dozen small private rooms, besides the big reading-room in the rear of the saloon, and I suppose more big jobs have been arranged in my place than in all the other sporting houses in New York put together."

"So I have heard."

"The boys know that they are perfectly safe here and that I will treat them on the square."

"Of course I expect them to behave them-

selves, and they know that I will not have any crooked work in my place."

"Certainly not."

"That wouldn't do, you know."

"No; for your house would soon get a bad name."

"Exactly! and I will not have it."

"Then I have things so arranged that if a detective comes into the saloon and acts as if he was after game, by means of a certain contrivance the barkeepers can give warning to any of the men in the back rooms who may have reason to be apprehensive that the fly cops are after them."

"That is a great idea!"

"Yes, it is pretty good."

"When I got the notion of this game in my mind, I thought of an old pal of mine who used to be with me when I was in St. Louis," the Kentuckian remarked.

"He would have been just the man for a bit of work of this kind," the sport continued.

"But when I came East there wasn't any chance for him, and he went away out West with a Captain Black, who was a regular king pin of a fellow; but luck was ag'in' the gang, and my pal got 'pinched,' so I heard, and is now doing time in some jail in Montana or Colorado."

"That was unfortunate."

"This Captain Black—William Black, or Black Bill, as his pals call him, will be just the man for my money," Boone declared.

"If I could get hold of some such man as he is, I could make a big stake out of this thing, sure!" the Kentuckian continued.

"Have you any idea where this Black Bill is?" the saloon-keeper asked, thoughtfully.

"No; out West, somewhere, I suppose, so there isn't any chance of getting at him; but I need just such a fellow."

"There was a stranger in my place last night—he came from the West, too, and the man who introduced him to me called him Black, and said he was an A No. 1 man; a good-sized fellow, with a swarthy face, black hair and beard."

"He answers to that description, and if he is the Black I mean, there is a chance for him to make big money."

"If he comes in again, suppose you have one of your boys sound him, and see if he is open for a job."

The old sport said that he would, and then Boone took his departure.

"I am on the track!" the Kentuckian muttered when he gained the street. "And it is big money that I will nail my man!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### PHYLLIS'S SUSPICIONS.

THE young lawyer escorted the millionaire's daughter to the *coupe*, assisted her to enter, and then took place by her side.

Away went the carriage at a slow trot, for the millionaire was a timid man and did not believe in fast horses, so the pair that were attached to the *coupe*, although an expensive and handsome team, were as fat as seals and decidedly disposed to be lazy.

"I told papa an awful story about this trip," the girl observed after the carriage started.

"How is that?"

"Why, there isn't really any need of your coming with me to see the horse."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, for the man is anxious for me to take it on trial, and if it does not suit me I can send it back."

"That is a fair offer enough."

"So you see there isn't any need of your going with me."

"Why did you wish me to go, then—simply so you might enjoy the pleasure of my society? For if that is the case I suppose I ought to feel extremely flattered."

"Yes, you certainly ought to, I suppose!" Phyllis exclaimed with a laugh.

"But it wasn't alone for the pleasure of enjoying your society that I arranged this trip," she continued.

"No, what then?"

"So I could get a chance to have a long, confidential talk with you."

"Well, I am decidedly flattered now!" Huntington exclaimed, bending his head and imprinting a kiss upon the hand of the girl, which he had taken caressingly in his own after the carriage started.

A slight blush rose to the face of the girl. "Be careful, Ralph! Some one might see you!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, and then if the news that I was permitted the liberty of kissing your dear little hand was carried to your father, there might be trouble."

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly there would be," the girl replied, with a grave shake of the head.

"But has papa said anything to you about paying attentions to me?" Phyllis continued.

"Not a word—why?"

"Because he has hinted to me that he was afraid that you were getting a little too attentive."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; he let fall a few words this morning, which made me think that his suspicions have been aroused in regard to us."

"I have not noticed any change in his manner toward me," the young lawyer remarked in a thoughtful way.

"I am certain that I have not made any mistake, and we must be very cautious."

"We surely have never been at all imprudent," Huntington replied.

"Yes, I know that, and I think I understand who it is that has put the idea in his head," the girl declared in a scornful way.

"Ah, yes, I can guess at whom your suspicions are directed."

"This miserable stenographer?"

"Miss Holbrooke?"

"Yes."

"Well, somehow, I haven't a particularly good opinion of that young woman," Huntington observed, thoughtfully.

"Although I must do her the justice to say that ever since she has been in the house she has done her best to be agreeable and pleasant to me."

"She is a miserable, deceitful cat!" the girl exclaimed.

"And I felt sure of it, too, from the very moment that she entered the house," Phyllis continued.

"She never deceived me, although she has tried her best to make me believe that she thought there never was any young lady in the world quite so nice as I am."

"Yes, I have noticed that she always seems very anxious to please you in every way."

"Ugh! she fawns on me sometimes in such a manner that it is the hardest work in the world for me to be civil to her!"

"And do you think that she has suggested to your father that there is a probability of our falling in love with each other?"

"Yes, I think so, because we have acted so prudently, and have been so careful in regard to our conduct all the time, that it would not be possible for my father to suspect that we cared in the least for each other if some one had not suggested the idea to him."

"Women, you know, are quick to jump to conclusions, and the instinct of her sex has led her to guess the truth," the girl continued.

"That is possible," the young lawyer assented, slowly and thoughtfully.

"But why should she trouble her head about the matter—what is it to her?" Huntington asked in perplexity.

"Oh, I don't know; she has some motive, of course," Phyllis replied, with a shake of the head.

"Perhaps she may have designs upon papa," the girl continued.

"She is not really bad-looking, although she is far from being a beauty, and she may flatter herself that she can succeed in captivating papa so that he will marry her."

"Well, from what I know of the old gentleman I should say that the chances are about a thousand to one against her succeeding if she has any idea of trying a game of that kind."

"Yes; the chances are against her, of course, but I think she is just one of the kind of women who would not hesitate to try a scheme of that sort."

"I regard her as a very dangerous and unscrupulous woman," Phyllis continued.

"She claims to be only twenty-two, you know, but I believe she is fully ten years older; in fact, I would not be surprised if she was nearer thirty-five than twenty-two."

"Yes, I agree with you there. Although she tries her best to appear young and girl-



fish, yet I am satisfied that she is much older than she says."

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"I don't like the idea of papa becoming interested in this spiritualism, for I don't believe in it at all. It is my idea that it is a regular humbug!"

"I haven't any faith that through the aid of these mediums—at so much per head, if you notice, Phyllis, there is almost always a question of money involved—we can communicate with the spirits of the departed."

"How strange it is that papa should take any interest in such a thing."

"Your father is getting old," the young lawyer explained.

"In reality he seems twenty years older than he really is, for the cares and anxieties of his business life have sapped his strength, and it is not wonderful that there should be one little weak spot in his head," Huntington argued.

"Well, I sought this interview with you so that I might explain how matters stand," Phyllis said.

"The necessity has arisen for us to use great caution, for I don't want papa to know yet awhile how we feel toward each other."

"Of course, I don't suppose that it is quite right for a penniless man like myself, who cannot even boast that he comes of some family who have been noted for generations, to aspire to the hand of a girl like yourself," Huntington admitted.

"But I never thought about the difference in our positions when I fell in love with you, and as you were kind enough to let me see by your actions that I was not indifferent to you, I was emboldened to seek to win you."

Phyllis took her lover's hand between her own soft palms and pressed it gently, while she looked with eyes full of love at him.

"Papa is worth a lot of money, of course, and I am one of the richest heiresses in the United States, but when it comes to the family question we haven't anything to boast of, for all of both papa and mamma's people are as poor as church-mice, and papa is the only one of the lot that ever made any money or amounted to anything."

"Papa has always been very good to me, and I would hate awfully to do anything to displease him," she continued.

"But when it comes to a girl taking a husband it is purely a personal matter."

"Most certainly!"

"I don't doubt that papa thinks that he ought to have a great deal to say about who I marry, for the majority of parents have an idea that they can pick out a much better husband than the daughter, but as the girl has got to live with the man, if there should happen to be any mistake, and the husband doesn't prove to be a good one, she is the one who has to suffer."

"Yes, that is true."

"Papa thinks, I know, that I ought to marry a man worth a good deal of money, a scion of one of the old New York families, or somebody else who amounts to something."

"Well, you surely deserve to have a good husband, for I am certain you are well calculated to make your husband happy!" the young man declared, gazing tenderly at the heiress.

She laughed a little and half-blushed.

"Ah, you are such a flatterer!" she exclaimed.

"It isn't any wonder that you turned my head with your soft speeches."

"No, no, I have never tried to flatter you," the lover declared.

"Well, while I don't pretend to be extra shrewd, yet I would not be my father's daughter if I did not possess a fair share of common sense."

"Now, while I am not absolutely ugly, yet I can never hope to set up for a beauty, so I am quite sure that no rich man, who has so much money of his own as to keep him from wanting any of mine, will be apt to fall in love with me because of my personal attractions."

"Ah, Phyllis, you do not do yourself justice!" Huntington exclaimed.

"The girl laughed, then blushed a little again, and seemed greatly pleased."

"Yes, yes I know you think I am a beauty because you have fallen in love with me, but nobody else has ever said so, that is, with the exception of the fortune-hunters,

who have been much more attracted by my wealth than by me."

"But you have had some honest wooers who, like myself, were attracted by the girl and not by her money."

"Yes, a few, but not many, and there wasn't any men with independent fortunes among them."

"The fact is I am not the kind of girl to attract the fellows," she continued, in an honest way.

"There isn't anything brilliant or dashing about me; I am not the sort to ever set the river on fire."

"Now this is what I have been constantly telling papa lately whenever he spoke about marrying, and if you will be patient, so as to give me time to bring papa around to my way of looking at the matter, I don't think there is a doubt that inside of a year I will be able to make him admit that if I choose to fall in love with a steady, sober-going business man, who will know enough to take care of my money, it will be a great deal better for me to marry such a man than to take one of the fine gentlemen who would be apt to squander both his own money and mine."

"Why, Phyllis, I am content to wait ten years, if you say so!" Huntington declared.

"Oh, I will not put you to so hard a test as that!" the girl replied.

"In a year or so, I feel sure I can arrange matters, but for the present we must use the utmost caution, and above all look out for Miss Holbrooke!"

At this point the conversation ended, for the carriage halted at the stable.

## CHAPTER X.

### IN THE SLUMS.

CHERRY STREET in the neighborhood of Roosevelt, at ten o'clock at night, is not one of the attractive quarters of New York.

It is where the poorest of the great city's laborers live, and with the honest sons of toil, and their families, are herded the petty criminals of the metropolis.

Saloons abound, the majority of them of the lowest class, and if a well-dressed stranger should happen to wander into one of these dens, the odds are a hundred to one that he would be robbed of his valuables before he got out.

In this particular part of the street there are a great many old houses, built of both wood and brick, generally two stories and an attic high, and some of them are so ancient that they are only mere shanties.

Just as the hands of the clocks pointed to the hour of ten, through the street came a rather tall and slenderly-built man.

He was dressed in a well-worn suit, with a derby hat, very much the worse for wear, pulled down over his eyes.

His face was long, with a prominent nose, high cheek-bones, while a pointed yellow mustache and imperial gave him a decidedly foreign look.

He was evidently in search of some particular house, for he was carefully examining the surroundings as he came on.

At last he halted in front of one of the old-fashioned, dilapidated houses which we have described.

"This must be the crib!" he ejaculated. "A red brick house, with a green door, between a barber-shop and a gin-mill, and this is the only house on the block which fills the bill."

The door was ajar; like the majority of the houses in the street, it was rented out in apartments, and the tenants were the poorest of the poor; so the stranger entered the house without having to ask any one for admittance.

There were no lights in the halls, and after the visitor got to the head of the stairs he lit a match so as to be able to see where he was going.

Up the second flight of stairs he went, and this brought him to the attic.

As soon as he gained the upper landing he whistled in a peculiar, shrill way, then came to a halt and waited.

In a few moments the door opened and a thick-set, black-bearded man, dressed roughly and looking like a longshoreman appeared.

"Is that you, professor?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, and I have managed to find you;

but, I say, whatever possessed a man like yourself to take up your quarters in this wretched hole?" the visitor exclaimed.

"Come in and I will explain."

The new-comer followed the black-bearded man into the attic, and then took a curious look around.

The room was scantily furnished, and everything was of the commonest description.

A tallow candle afforded light.

"Well, of all the dens that I ever saw this is about the worst!" the visitor declared, as he seated himself upon a corner of the rude table which stood in the center of the apartment.

The black-bearded man stuck his hands in his pockets and laughed.

"Isn't this the proper caper for a man who is down on his luck?" the host asked.

"Yes, but you are not in that condition," the other objected.

"Very true; but I have good reasons for wishing certain parties to think I am in that fix."

"Ah! I comprehend."

"A certain party has been making some anxious inquiries about me at that sporting crib on Sixth avenue."

"How is that?" the other inquired in surprise. "I thought that only a few of your old pals, like myself, knew you were in New York."

"I thought so, too, but it seems I am not correct. The saloon-keeper is a good, square fellow, and will not give away who the man is that wants information about me."

"The story goes that this unknown has got hold of a good job, and is anxious to get a man like myself to work it."

"Ah, yes; I see," the professor remarked.

"Well, I don't wonder at the man wanting you to go in with him, for you have a big reputation for pulling things off in good shape."

"Yes, and this unknown, happening to hear that I was in New York, reckoned that I was just the man to help him win a big stake."

"He is a sensible fellow!"

"Ah, yes, professor; but, you see, I don't put any faith in the story."

"You don't?"

"Nary a bit!"

"How is that?"

"I think it is a 'plant!'"

"You don't mean it?"

"Oh, yes, I do! It is a trick to lay me by the heels!"

"But you have never operated here in the East at all."

"That doesn't matter. Justice has long arms, you know, and it is an easy matter for the law to reach clear from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean."

"Yes, that is true."

"I think the fellow has laid a trap for me, and so I have arranged a little game to beat him."

"That is good!"

"And I want you to help me."

"You can depend upon me, of course!" the other answered, immediately.

"The man is anxious for an interview with me, and so I told the saloon sport that as things were not coming my way as well as they might, I had taken up my quarters with an old pal down here in Cherry street, and if the man would come here at ten o'clock to-night I would be glad to have a talk with him."

"Yes, yes, and I don't suppose there is any doubt but what he will come?"

"Oh, he will come, for he said he would meet me anywhere, and he is to drop into the saloon to-night at half past nine to learn when and where I will see him."

"Oh, he'll come!" the black-bearded creak repeated with a sardonic grin. "But I am afraid he will have a squad of detectives with him."

## CHAPTER XI

### AN EXPLANATION.

THE visitor gave vent to a low whistle, evidently meaning to express vast astonishment.

"A squad of detectives, eh?"

"That is my suspicion."

"It is all a game to get you in a trap?"

"Exactly!"



"But as you are up to the trick the fellow will not be able to work it."

"No, unless he is possessed of superhuman smartness," the black-bearded man replied with a cynical laugh.

"Possibly you wonder why it is that, as my suspicions are excited, I have anything to do with the stranger at all," the host continued.

"Yes, I am rather surprised."

"Well, I have a good deal of curiosity in my composition, and I would like to know just why this man is after me."

"Oh, isn't the party a regular detective from the West?"

"No, I don't think so," the other replied in a thoughtful manner.

"Of course, the way I am situated I am not able to form a good opinion in regard to the matter, and so I arranged a little scheme which, with the assistance of Mexican Bill and yourself, will, I think, enable me to get at the truth."

"Ah, yes, I see."

"I don't like the idea that there is a fellow all ready to strike at me from the dark, so to speak."

"You are right! a thought of that kind is deuced unpleasant."

"And I want to know just how the thing stands, for I have got some nice little schemes to work here in New York, and I want to feel free to go ahead."

"I don't want to be hampered by the thought that there is a fellow on my track, anxious to get in a blow at me upon the first opportunity."

"No, for if a man is troubled in that way it is apt to make him a little nervous, no matter how cool and calculating he usually is, and a man in that condition does not play as good a game as he might," the professor observed.

"That is correct," the host responded. "Now then, I think this thing is a plant, as I observed."

"I do not believe that the man wants to see about going into a scheme."

"That is a clever device on his part so as to be able to get at me."

"As I said, he will come with a squad of detectives at his back, and just as soon as he meets me he will give a signal and the fly cops will rush in," the black-bearded fellow explained.

"A very neat little game, but as you are up to snuff the man will not be able to work it this time."

"Then on the other hand, if I have made a mistake—if my suspicions are unfounded, and the man really has a good scheme to offer, why, I would like to know what it is."

"How are you going to fix it?"

"I have thought of a way, and this is where you come in."

"Go ahead! I am with you!"

"You will receive the gentleman here. I have left instructions so he will be able to find the place without any difficulty."

"Oh, yes, I found it all right."

"He comes to see Black Bill, and when he finds you in possession of the premises he will undoubtedly tell you that he must see Black Bill in person, or else he will not be able to do any business."

"Then you will explain that you are Black Bill's pal, and it was his idea that you would do just as well."

"This bit of talk is to gain time so as to give me an opportunity to see whether the man has come alone, as he will if he is acting on the square, or whether he has a lot of man-hunters with him, ready to jump in when he gives the signal."

"Yes, I understand."

"If you can keep him talking for five minutes it will give me ample time to see whether there are any shadows at his back or not."

"Oh, I can do that undoubtedly, and it will not be much trouble either."

"Then, after about five minutes, you will pretend to be convinced that everything is all right, no matter whether you are or not, you understand, that does not make any difference; even if you are satisfied that he is a police spy in disguise you are to go ahead all the same."

"All right! I will do it."

"Knock three times at that door," and the speaker pointed to one in the left wall of the

apartment, "and sing out, 'Come on, Bill, the party wants to talk to you.'"

"I'm fly!" the professor exclaimed. "And you can bet your sweet life I will do the job up prime!"

"Well, I'll be going, for it is getting nearly time for the party to arrive," the host observed, moving toward the door in the wall.

"I suppose you have got things fixed so you can ascertain whether the fellow has got the detectives at his heels or not?"

"Oh, yes!" the other answered. "This place is an old roost for men in our line."

"This door leads into the garret of the adjoining house, and a man going down the stairs can go out into the street, or into the back yard, and there by climbing a fence he can make his way into the side street, so as to give the slip to any coppers who may be watching at the front door of this house or the other one."

"This is an elegant arrangement!" the professor exclaimed. "How does it happen that you caught onto it?"

"A New York crook whom I ran across in the West put me up to it," the other replied.

"He was born in this neighborhood, and as I happened to tell him once that I intended to try my luck in New York some time, he gave me the particulars about this crib, remarking that the knowledge might come in handy to me if I ever came to the city."

"Well, the thing has come in just right."

"Oh, yes, for, thanks to it, I will be able to find out exactly what this unknown party is up to."

"If he is on the square, and has got a good scheme, I am his man, but if he is trying to nab me, I shall endeavor to work the trick so he will soon come to the conclusion that it is the worst piece of work that he ever undertook."

"Ah, yes, and you are just the man to play a game of that kind for all it is worth."

"You bet!" cried the black-bearded fellow.

And then he disappeared through the door, closing it behind him, and the sound of a bolt shooting home in its socket came distinctly to the ears of the professor.

"Bill is right about that," the visitor muttered, as he seated himself upon the solitary stool which the attic possessed and leaned his back against the table.

"Black Bill is as tough a nut as any man will find to crack from the salt water to the Rocky Mountains, and I would hate like blazes to have him get after me, not that I am any slouch either."

The professor had a long wait, for it was a good thirty minutes before the sound of footsteps, ascending the stairs, came to his ears.

Then there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" he exclaimed.

The door opened and Boone, the Kentuckian, made his appearance.

A look of surprise appeared on his countenance when he beheld the professor, and he glanced inquiringly around the room.

"I'm not the man you expected to see, eh?" the professor queried.

"No."

"You are the sport who wants to see Black Bill, hey?"

"Yes."

"And have come by appointment?"

"By appointment."

"Well, sit down and make yourself comfortable," the professor remarked, rising and tendering the stool.

"Bill isn't here yet?"

"No, but he will be along pretty soon. You will not have long to wait."

"Take the stool, for I can roost on the table," and the speaker resumed the seat which he had formerly occupied on the corner of the table.

The Kentuckian seated himself on the stool.

"I'm Black Bill's pal, by the way," the professor remarked after a minute's silence.

"Oh, is that so?"

"Yes; what is the matter with your telling me about this little scheme which you want Bill to go into?"

The Kentuckian surveyed the speaker for a moment and then shook his head.

"Don't think I will do as well?"

"No, hardly!"

"But you might explain the matter to me," the other suggested.

"Black Bill and I are old pals as I told you," he continued.

"In fact we are just like two brothers, and I could tell you in a twinkling whether the job would be likely to suit him or not."

"No, I think I had better wait until I can talk to Black Bill himself."

"All right! It is your say so, of course, but Bill told me that I had better ask you, for he didn't know but what I would do just as well."

"Hardly," the other replied. "I think that in a matter of this kind it is always better to talk to the man himself."

"Well, perhaps it is, but, as I told you, Bill and me are old pals, and I have arranged a great many business affairs for him."

Then there was silence for three or four minutes, the professor drumming with his fingers on the table in an absent sort of way, while the visitor looked thoughtfully about him.

"How soon do you expect your partner?" the Kentuckian asked at last.

"He ought to be here now," the professor answered. "I will soon see."

Then going to the small door, he knocked and called:

"Hey, Bill! are you there? The party wants to see you!"

Then came the sound of the moving bolt.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A SURPRISE.

An expression came into the eyes of the Kentuckian like the one which appears in the orbs of a hawk when he sights his game.

"Does he want to see Black Bill?" asked a hoarse voice, as the door partially opened and a black beard, surmounted by a pair of gleaming eyes, appeared in the crack.

"Yes; come in, Bill, the party has got a fine scheme to propose to you."

"All right! I'm his man!"

The door opened wide, and the speaker strode into the room, and at the same moment the door leading into the entry was thrown open and Inspector Grimshaw, accompanied by detective O'Callahan, rushed in.

Their revolvers were out, and they leveled them at the man with the black beard.

"Don't attempt to resist, or it will be the worse for you," the inspector warned.

"Snap on the bracelets, O'Callahan!" he continued.

The detective had the handcuffs in his hand, and he advanced toward the threatened man, who did not manifest any opposition, merely staring at the officers in astonishment.

The professor had retreated into a corner as the policemen rushed into the room, apparently very much astonished, and the Kentuckian, also producing a revolver, had risen to his feet as if he wanted to be all ready to take a hand in the fight, if there was to be one.

"What in blazes do you mean?" exclaimed the black-bearded man, in great surprise.

As the only light was that afforded by the flickering tallow candle, the room was not well illuminated, and it was not until after the Kentuckian sprang to his feet that he got a good view of the new-comer's face, and then an exclamation of disappointment burst from his lips.

"Great Scott! this isn't the man after all!" he cried.

"Eh?" exclaimed the inspector.

"What?" roared O'Callahan.

"Not the man?" ejaculated Grimshaw.

"No, sah! this isn't Black Bill!" Boone declared.

"Well, I reckon that is what people call me, but it isn't my name, of course, and if the particular Black Bill that you gents is arter is wanted for anything, I am ready to swear out-and-out that I am not the man!" the black-muzzled fellow exclaimed, with a grin.

"You are not called Black Bill by your pals?" the Kentuckian questioned.

"Yes, I am, but, as I said afore, if you want a Black Bill for anything, I am not the man," the new-comer replied.



"This is the only Black Bill that I know anything about," the professor observed.

He was quick in coming to the aid of his pal in working the trick.

Of course, the moment that this Black Bill made his appearance, he understood the game that the real Black Bill designed to play.

The stranger who desired an interview with him was a man-hunter, intent on his capture, and as soon as the real Black Bill made this discovery, he sent the false Black Bill in his place to interview the stranger while he proceeded to get out of the way.

The policemen looked disgusted.

"This isn't the man then?" Inspector Grimshaw asked.

"No, he looks a little like the other, and when he first came into the room, in the dim light, I thought he was the man, but just as soon as I got a good look at his face I saw at once that he wasn't my mutton!" Boone declared.

"Then you will not make a charge against him?" the officer inquired.

"Oh, no, I cannot!" the Kentuckian replied. "I never saw this fellow before in my life, and don't know anything about him."

"I thought there must be some mistake about the matter," the black-bearded fellow observed with a hoarse chuckle.

"Because I didn't know that I had been doing anything to get myself into trouble, and then again the fellow chuckled.

"Yes, it is a mistake," the Kentuckian admitted, very reluctantly, evidently decidedly annoyed by his failure.

"As I said, I don't know anything about you. You are a perfect stranger to me, so I have no charge to bring against you."

"You have made a bad break this time, haven't you?" exclaimed the false Black Bill, grinning at the inspector.

The officer was not disposed to stand any chaff of this kind, being decidedly put out by the complete failure of the carefully-planned scheme.

I will nail you one of these days though unless you are mighty careful how you carry sail!" the inspector declared as he turned to depart.

"Oh, yes, of course, but you won't if I know myself and I think I do!" the false Black Bill declared in a jeering way.

"Maybe you will have cause to change your opinion before you are six months older!" the inspector retorted as he took his departure.

The others had already made their exit from the apartment, and were on the way down the stairs.

Grimshaw followed them, feeling decidedly angry.

No words were exchanged between the three until they were in the street, and a half a block away from the house, then the Kentuckian blurted out

"I reckon, inspector, that you must think I am the biggest kind of a donkey to have brought you on a wild-goose chase of this kind!"

"Oh, no, it isn't your fault," the officer replied. "You planned the game nicely, and we carried the thing out as cleverly as it could be arranged. I feel annoyed, naturally, that we had all our trouble for nothing."

"Yes, it is a pity, after we worked the trick so neatly that we couldn't put the collar on the chap," Detective O'Callahan observed.

"I suppose you have about come to the conclusion that that ain't no sich person as this hyer Black Bill!" the Kentuckian exclaimed.

"Oh, no, I know that such a man exists all right, but I must admit to you that I sometimes have my doubts as to whether you really saw him here in New York," the inspector remarked.

"Inspector, I am just as certain that I saw him the other day, at the Astor House, as I am that we are walking on this street to-night!" Boone declared, in the most positive manner.

"Well, there isn't any doubt about that," the officer affirmed.

"You saw to-night that just as soon as I got a good look at the man, I knew immediately that he was not the one I wanted," the Kentuckian said.

"Yes, that is true," the inspector admitted. "And as you decided so quickly that he was not the right man, it seems to me as if you wouldn't be apt to make a mistake as to whether you did see the real Black Bill or not."

"You are right about that! I saw the man surely enough, but, somehow, this time I got on a false trail, worse luck!" the Kentuckian declared.

"Well, well, this is a matter which requires considerable head-work," the inspector remarked, in a thoughtful way.

"Now, to get down to the rights of the thing, there are two theories which we can go on."

"The first one is that you were deceived by some strong resemblance, and didn't see Black Bill at all."

"That is possible, of course, but I would be willing to bet ten years of my life that I didn't make any mistake!" Boone exclaimed.

"Well, there is this much to be said in favor of your declaration, and that is there is not a bit of proof, so far, to show that you made any mistake, excepting that we have not been able to get on the track of the man."

"That is true!" Detective O'Callahan assented.

"The other theory is that you *did* see Black Bill, and when we went to nail him, in some way he got wind of our coming beforehand, and gave leg bail," the inspector observed.

"Exactly! that was his game!" Boone declared.

"And you struck on his track again in the up-town sporting-house," Grimshaw continued.

"But as he is an uncommonly shrewd fellow he took the alarm at once when he heard that a stranger wanted to see him."

"You see, he was too sharp to take any stock in the story that you had a scheme which you wanted him to go into."

"The man was too shrewd not to suspect at once that you were setting a trap for him."

"There is a deal of good, hard, horse sense in what the inspector is saying," O'Callahan observed, with a wise shake of the head.

"Yes, I reckon you are figuring it out about right," the Kentuckian assented.

"Now then, when he found that some one was after him, he immediately made up his mind to see what kind of a game was on foot."

"Yes, it would be the most natural thing in the world for him to act in that way," Boone remarked.

"You can bet high on that!" Detective O'Callahan declared.

"He didn't relish the idea that there was a man in the dark, so to speak, trying to get a chance to make a crack at him," the detective continued.

"Therefore, he arranged this little game which he worked to-night," the inspector observed.

"By it he killed two birds with one stone, you see. He anticipated that if he put in an appearance he would be arrested, so he put forward this other duck to play Black Bill."

"It was a mighty shrewd game!" O'Callahan exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, you are right about that," the inspector assented.

"For, under the circumstances, it would be the most natural thing in the world for us to come to the conclusion that a mistake had been made, and the real Black Bill was not in New York."

"Another point! by working the game in this way he found out just what we were up to, and he is fully satisfied now that there is a man in New York who is trying his best to hunt him down," Grimshaw said, in conclusion.

"And I will do the trick, too, if it is possible for mortal man to work it," the Kentuckian declared.

"Here is another thing which is worth taking into consideration," the inspector observed, in a shrewd way.

"These two fellows whom we met to-night are both strangers in the city, I think, for I don't remember to have ever run across them before. You don't recognize them, O'Callahan?"

"No, I never saw either one of them."

"And yet from certain ear-marks that the

pair bear I am pretty well satisfied that they belong to the crooked fraternity."

"Not a doubt of it!" the detective exclaimed in the most positive manner.

"Now, who are these fellows—where did they come from, and what are they doing here in New York?" the inspector asked.

"Perhaps they are members of Black Bill's gang who have come from the West with him?" the Kentuckian replied.

"That is the correct answer to the riddle, I think," the inspector remarked.

"And now I propose to show Mr. Black Bill that he can't come to New York and work his little hanky-panky games with impunity," the officer continued.

"I shall put a dozen of my best 'shadows' on this case, and if I don't succeed in nailing this great Western chief in the long run I shall be very much surprised."

"Well, I am going to try a little of the shadow business myself," Boone declared.

"He has won the first two tricks, but a game of this kind is a long one, and he is so situated that a single mistake will be fatal to him."

It will be seen that these human bloodhounds were all stanch on the trail.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE SPY'S SURMISES.

AGAIN we return to the mansion of the millionaire.

It is ten days since the one when the Englishman, and the young Westerner, accepted the hospitality of Mr. Lenbold.

The reader has doubtless suspected that the free-spoken son of the prairies, who called himself Sidney Freemont, was the acute spy whom the veteran detective, Joe Phenix, had agreed to furnish to the millionaire.

Mr. Lenbold seized upon an early opportunity to have a private interview with the young man, and this took place on the first evening of the spy's sojourn in the house.

"How do you intend to set to work?" was the millionaire's question.

"It is impossible for me to reply at present," the spy responded.

"It will be necessary to me to study the situation for awhile."

"Ah, yes, I presume so. It will take some time, of course."

"Yes; allow me to watch matters for awhile, say ten days, and then I will be able to go ahead with a clear comprehension of what the situation requires."

The millionaire thought this programme was just about what it ought to be, and so until the time expired he did not attempt to question the disguised detective.

But he kept a close watch on him however, for he had a curiosity to see how a regular professional man-hunter managed a game of this kind.

To his decided surprise he could not perceive that the young man was doing any particular work in the detective line, and if he had not known that the supposed Westerner was merely assuming a character he never would have suspected him of being anything but what he appeared to be.

The young man certainly played the character to perfection of the dashy, free-hearted Westerner, who had plenty of money, and had come to the great metropolis of the New World for the express purpose of seeing the sights and enjoying himself.

Not that the young man was at all disposed to be fast, or to indulge in any questionable pleasures, for he was, apparently, a very steady-going fellow, without any disposition to become a "high-roller," as the gay young bloods of the great city—who go in to cut a dash—are termed.

The millionaire did not comprehend that the best detective is the one who does his work so skillfully that no one suspects that he is doing any work at all.

But in spite of the fact that the young man had apparently not troubled himself about any one in the house, yet when the ten days had elapsed he was prepared to make a complete report.

It was in the evening, after dinner, that Lenbold and the young Westerner repaired to the library of the millionaire.

Lenbold had paid a visit to some of his old friends in Wall street that afternoon, and during the dinner he had let fall the remark that there was an important movement in



stocks in operation, and any one possessed of the knowledge of how things were going, could make considerable money by a little judicious speculation just now.

The disguised spy took the cue at once, and announced that he had a few hundred that he could spare just as well as not, and he wouldn't mind trying his luck in the stock-market.

So when the dinner ended the two went to the library, with the avowed intent of talking the matter over.

Lenbold locked the door after they entered, and then remarked:

"Now then, we can speak with perfect freedom."

"Yes, sir," responded Freemont, who had taken possession of a comfortable easy-chair.

The old millionaire sat down within a yard of the young man, and fixed his keen eyes upon his face.

"What do you think of the situation?" Lenbold questioned.

"Well, at present all I can do is to tell you what I surmise, for as yet I have not been able to get hold of anything of importance."

"Hardly time, I suppose?" the millionaire suggested.

"The fact is that during my sojourn in the house nothing has developed."

"I understand; it is a slow process and cannot be hurried."

"The most important thing is in regard to these seances, I presume?"

"Yes, but I have not been able to get Miss Holbrooke to conduct one since you have been in the house."

"She has not been feeling very well, and she says that to go through a seance is a great tax on her nervous system."

"If the manifestation is a genuine one, the explanation is reasonable, but if there is any trickery about the matter, she may hesitate to hold the seance for fear that you would invite either Mr. St. Germaine or myself, and that one of us might be smart enough to detect the fraud if there is anything wrong."

"That is possible, of course, but I hardly think it is the truth," the millionaire remarked, slowly, evidently not at all disposed to take this view of the case.

"Of course, it is not possible for me to come to any determination about the matter until I have an opportunity of seeing how the affair is managed. And even then, if there is trickery, and Miss Holbrooke is a skillful performer, it may not be possible for me to detect the cheat, although I may be satisfied that the manifestation is not a genuine one."

"I don't know much about such matters from experience, but I have read plenty of accounts, and so I am aware that the trick is performed sometimes so cleverly that it is almost impossible for a looker-on to detect how it is done, although they may be perfectly satisfied that the spirits have nothing to do with it."

"Miss Holbrooke told me, just before we sat down to the table to-day, that she felt a great deal better," Lenbold remarked. "She said she was going to lie down for a while after dinner, and when she got up she thought she would feel well enough to hold a seance."

"That is good, for it will give me an opportunity to look into the matter."

"I asked her if she had any objections to your being present, stating that I had spoken to you about the matter, and you were greatly interested."

"Ah, yes, it was a good idea to pave the way in that manner."

"She replied that she would be pleased to have you present."

"That is good, and I will be glad of the chance."

"Did Mr. Phenix tell you that in these spirit messages on the slate certain statements were made in regard to my daughter and Mr. Huntington, my confidential man of business?"

"Yes, and I have carefully observed both the parties during my sojourn here."

"Of course I don't know what these statements were but I can conjecture."

"They were to the effect that there was a love affair between Miss Phyllis and Mr. Huntington?"

"Yes, and have you seen anything to

lead you to suspect that the statement is true?" the father asked, anxiously.

"All I can say about the matter is to tell you what I suspect, but I haven't any proof to support my suspicions."

"I am only jumping to a conclusion, you understand."

"Yes, but you have surely seen something to excite your surmises?"

"Oh, no! 'trifles light as air' merely. A look in the eyes of the girl as she spoke to the gentleman, a certain something in the expression of his face as he watched your daughter speak."

"You think, then, that they have learned to care for each other?" the millionaire questioned with a cloud on his brow.

"Yes, I do, but, mind! do not build too much on this, for 'tis but a surmise on my part and I may not be correct."

"I sincerely hope that you have made a mistake, for I have other views for my girl."

"And now there is another matter that I must speak about: this Englishman, St. Germaine, as he calls himself."

"Yes, what of him?"

"I think he is a fraud. It is my impression that he is not an Englishman at all. I lived for some time on the other side of the water, and so am well acquainted with the breed."

"You surprise me!" Lenbold exclaimed.

Then there came a knock at the door.

It was a servant with a message from Miss Holbrooke that she was in the drawing-room.

"That means that she is ready for the seance!" the millionaire declared after the servant departed.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### A LITTLE HOOCUS-POCUS.

"I AM really glad of it, for I am curious to see this process of spiritual slate-writing," the spy remarked.

"I am pretty well posted about that sort of thing, although I never saw an exhibition, as I said; but I have read a great deal about it, and was once very well acquainted with a celebrated conjurer, one of the best on the professional stage, whose boast it was that he could duplicate all the feats that the mediums performed and on several occasions he succeeded in showing to the satisfaction of large audiences that some of the most celebrated mediums were nothing but cunning tricksters."

"Yes, I have read of such things," Lenbold remarked.

It was plain from the way he spoke that he did not relish the plain speaking of the disguised detective.

"This gentleman at different times related to me how it was that these so-called mediums managed to trick their auditors, so that I am pretty well posted in regard to the matter, and if this Miss Holbrooke is producing her spirit slate messages by trickery, and has not hit upon some new device which I have never heard of, I will undoubtedly be able to tell you how she does the work."

"Possibly you may be able to do so, but I cannot believe that there is any trickery about the matter," the old gentleman remarked, evidently very reluctant to have his faith in Miss Holbrooke's spiritual gifts destroyed.

"Oh, by the way, there is another thing that I have surmised since I took up my quarters here, and which I have neglected to mention, and it concerns Miss Holbrooke, too."

"Yes! what is it?"

"The lady is in love with Mr. Huntington, and is jealous of your daughter."

The millionaire was surprised.

"Strange that I have not noticed anything of the kind."

"Not that I have the slightest objection, you understand," he hastened to add.

"To my thinking, you comprehend, such a girl as Miss Holbrooke would be decidedly more suitable to Mr. Huntington than my daughter."

"It may be possible that the gentleman has an eye to the main chance," the Westerner suggested.

"Miss Holbrooke is not happy in the possession of a father worth millions of dollars."

"If my daughter should so far forget the duty which she owes to me as to marry without my consent, you may rest assured that neither she nor her husband would ever get a chance to handle much of my money!" the old millionaire declared, with a harsh expression both in his face and voice.

"I would not see my child actually starve because she had been disobedient and made a fool of herself, you understand," Lenbold continued.

"But I would arrange the matter so that she would receive just enough money per year for a bare support, say from six hundred to a thousand dollars, enough for herself and her family to live on if they practiced economy."

"Well, that would afford a living, but not a great many luxuries, and if this Mr. Huntington is a fortune-hunter, seeking your daughter merely on account of the wealth which he thinks she will one day inherit, he will be disagreeably disappointed."

"Most assuredly he will be!" the old millionaire declared.

"Well, as the gentleman is a stranger, it is not possible for me to know much about him, but if I were you, and suspected that he was attracted to Miss Phyllis principally because he supposed she would inherit your wealth, I would take an early occasion to let him know what your ideas are on the subject of your daughter marrying a man of whom you did not approve."

"Yes, yes, you are right," Lenbold responded.

"And I can do it in a quiet way too."

Then he reflected for a few moments.

"Do you think that Miss Holbrooke is really in love with Huntington, and is jealous of my daughter?" he asked.

"Yes, I have kept a careful watch on her, and am sure I haven't made any mistake."

"Ah, humph!" and the old millionaire stroked his beard for a few moments in a reflective way.

"Do you think that Huntington is at all attracted by her?"

"He treats her politely, but I don't think that he cares for her."

"Well, an idea has just come to me," the old gentleman said slowly.

"Of course you understand, Mr. Freemont, that this is a very delicate matter," he continued.

"My daughter is very dear to me, and I shrink from doing anything to make her unhappy; yet, in a case of this kind—when it comes to selecting a husband, I feel that she ought not to be allowed to marry a man without either fortune or position."

"If you will permit me to express an opinion, I should say that it depends a good deal on the man," the other observed, with all the frankness of an open-hearted Westerner.

"Yes, yes; that is the argument that she undoubtedly would advance if I discussed the matter with her," the millionaire exclaimed a little impatiently.

"But, my dear sir, the argument is not sound; for the chances are far greater, in my opinion, that the man who comes of a good family and has always had plenty of money at his disposal, will be more apt to make a good husband for a wealthy girl than a poor fellow who has never been used to riches, and has no ideas of how to properly handle the cash."

"It is one of those subjects upon which there is a deal to be said on both sides."

"Very true; but as I remarked, Phyllis is very dear to me. I am most anxious to secure her happiness, and I would like to arrange the matter without having any trouble with her."

"You see, Mr. Freemont, I understand womankind well enough to comprehend that if I should be injudicious enough to play the role of the stern parent and say outright to my girl, 'I do not think Mr. Huntington is the man for your husband, and you shall not marry him,' the chances are that she would feel a strong disposition to rebel against my authority."

"Yes, undoubtedly," the Westerner assented. "There are plenty of instances on record to show that parental interference in a case of this kind often produces the exact result which the parent hoped to prevent."

"Now, then, I am willing to spend a liberal amount of money to arrange the affair."



so that I will not have any trouble with my daughter in regard to the matter."

"Well, I agree with you that a direct, open prohibition would in all probability be about the worst move you could make," Freemont remarked.

"That is my idea. Now, suppose I try this scheme. In the first place I will quietly let Mr. Huntington understand that I have a husband in view for my daughter, a wealthy young man, whom I consider to be a suitable match for her, and that in case I found she was inclined to form another union, without my consent, I should arrange the matter so that none of my money would come to her."

"That would be a gentle hint for him not to presume to aspire to Miss Phyllis's hand."

"Exactly! and the young man is too shrewd not to comprehend my meaning."

"And then I will say, in a joking way, you understand, 'Speaking of marriage, you and Miss Holbrooke would make a nice match, and, in fact, I think so much of you both that I would be willing to give you a marriage portion of ten thousand dollars if you conclude to join in wedlock.'"

"That certainly is a liberal offer!" the spy exclaimed.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A LITTLE HOCUS-POCUS.

"Oh, yes, it is not every father who would freely give ten thousand dollars in order to avoid having trouble with an obstinate girl," the millionaire remarked.

"It would not be a bad idea for you to allow the lady to know what you would do on the money question in case the two made a match," Freemont suggested.

"You are right, and I will take an early opportunity to do so."

"But now let us go to Miss Holbrooke."

"Do you hold the seances in the drawing-room?"

"Oh, no, that is too public a place," the millionaire replied.

"There is a spare apartment on the main floor, which the architect intended for a billiard-room, but as I have no liking for anything of the kind I have used it as a sort of an office—that was before the addition, where my office now is, was built."

"Then the room is all right—there cannot be any trickery about that."

"Oh, no!" the millionaire exclaimed. "No possibility of anything of the kind, and when you come to see the exhibition you will see that there isn't any chance for trickery."

The spy comprehended from the way in which the old gentleman spoke that he was firmly convinced that the manifestation was a genuine one.

The pair proceeded to the drawing-room, where they found Miss Holbrooke waiting for them.

"I hope you feel better," the millionaire remarked.

"Oh, yes, my headache is gone, and I do not think it will return."

"I have been telling Mr. Freemont about your slate-writing manifestations, and as he has never seen anything of the sort, he is much interested," Mr. Lenbold observed.

"It is very strange, and I do not understand it myself," the young lady replied.

"I cannot explain how it is that I was able to do it," she continued. "I was not conscious that I possessed any gifts in that line until I made the acquaintance of a professional medium, and by accident she discovered that I was fully capable of producing these surprising results."

"Yes; and when Miss Holbrooke told me about the matter I advised her to cultivate this peculiar gift," the millionaire remarked.

"I cannot pretend to explain how it is that I am able to produce the phenomena," the young lady said. "For it is as great a mystery to me as it is to anybody else."

"It is a truly wonderful thing, as you will see," the old gentleman remarked.

He then led the way to the small apartment which was in the rear of the house at the end of the hall.

It was a room about twelve feet square, nicely furnished, of course, for all the appointments of the millionaire's mansion were luxurious in the extreme.

At the further end of the room was a small square table, covered with a handsomely embroidered cloth.

It stood out far enough from the wall to allow of a chair being placed between it and the end of the room, and above the chair a gas bracket projected.

There was a slate on the table, a common, ordinary slate such as are used by school-children.

The millionaire requested the Westerner to examine the slate, and satisfy himself that it was in its normal condition.

Freemont did so, and remarked that it was just a common slate such as could be purchased at any book-store.

Miss Holbrooke turned the gas down, so the room was only half illuminated, then taking a seat at the table, she drew a small, peculiar-looking, round metal piece from her pocket, which she placed in the palm of her left hand, supporting the hand with her right.

The gaslight, shining down over her shoulders, danced upon the shining surface of the piece of metal.

She fixed her eyes in a steadfast gaze upon the token.

Mr. Lenbold and his guest had taken seats in the middle of the apartment, a yard or so away from the table.

The disguised spy watched the young woman with a deal of curiosity.

In his opinion the spirits had nothing whatever to do with a proceeding of this kind.

And in the present case he doubted whether the unknown power, which the Frenchman, Mesmer, was the first to call to the attention of the world, was about to be invoked.

He suspected that in the present case the result was to be produced by sheer trickery.

Motionless as a graven image, Miss Holbrooke sat and stared at the metal disk.

Then the watcher noticed that her eyes seemed to become heavy, and they took on a peculiar glassy expression.

"She is going into the trance state," the millionaire whispered in the ear of the Westerner.

"Yes, so it appears," Freemont replied, and by this time the sharp-witted young man had come to the conclusion that if Miss Holbrooke was playing a part she was really a superior actress, for she was doing it to perfection.

For fully five minutes the girl gazed at the metal, and then, suddenly, her head drooped and she bent forward as though she had lost all power over herself.

Her head rested upon the table, and it appeared as if she had gone into a deep sleep.

"It is necessary to allow her to remain in this condition for fully five minutes," the old gentleman whispered in the ear of his companion. "This is to give time for the influence to pervade her entire system."

"Ah, yes, I comprehend," and the Westerner nodded his head and looked wise.

"It is really the most astonishing thing," the millionaire continued. "And if the results are not produced by spiritual influence, then I am entirely unable to account for them."

"You understand, I presume, Mr. Freemont, that after she wakes from this state of trance she has absolutely no knowledge of what has occurred while she was in that condition."

"Yes, I have heard it so stated."

"It is a fact, and it is really a most wonderful thing."

The young man thought that it was a deal more wonderful that an old, shrewd, experienced business man, who had been sagacious enough to amass a fortune of several millions, should be weak-minded enough to believe that the immortal spirits of another and a better world would descend from their sphere of bliss and be obliging enough to write all sorts of messages upon a slate.

It was a peculiar sort of weakness which this otherwise strong and able man had developed.

But from this fact it was not safe to argue that the old millionaire was going into his second childhood, for Freemont knew enough about the followers of spiritualism to be aware that some very bright and brainy men firmly believed that, under certain conditions, communications could be received from the inhabitants of the other world, the abode of the departed.

After five minutes had expired, Miss Hol-

brooke's head rose from the table, and she settled back in her chair with her eyes fixed in a glassy and unmeaning stare on the slate.

"She is ready to proceed," Mr. Lenbold remarked, in a low tone.

"Do you care to write a message upon the slate?"

"Yes, I shouldn't mind," Freemont replied.

"It must be in the form of a question, short, and direct to the point, for experience has shown that the spirits seem to be reluctant to answer at length."

"Probably they are fatigued by the journey from the other world," the Westerner suggested.

Lenbold looked at him sharply, but the face of the young man wore an innocent expression, and he did not look as if he had spoken sarcastically.

"You must approach the table, write the question which you desire to ask in a plain, legible hand on the slate, then turn it so the writing will be on the under side, therefore cannot meet her eyes; if the conditions are favorable the spirits will impel her to write an answer on the blank side of the slate," the millionaire explained.

"All right. I comprehend," Freemont remarked.

"Are you ready to receive a communication?" Mr. Lenbold asked, addressing the girl.

"Yes, all ready," Miss Holbrooke replied in a strange, mechanical way, while with a glassy gaze she still stared at the slate.

The disguised spy rose and, going to the table, took the pencil.

The Westerner felt satisfied that he could prove that the spirit-answerer was an ignoramus by the first question, so he wrote on the slate:

"Will the woman I love marry me?"

Then reversing the slate he placed it before Miss Holbrooke and resumed his seat.

For a few moments the girl remained motionless.

"It is sometimes ten minutes before the spirits impel her to write," the millionaire informed his companion in a half-whisper.

But the "spirits" were evidently disposed to be agreeable on this occasion, for in a couple of minutes Miss Holbrooke reached forward, grasped the edge of the slate with the fingers of her right hand and drew it toward her until only the end frame of the slate was on the table.

Then she stared at the slate for a few moments.

"You will see that it is not possible for her, from the way she is holding the slate, to see the under side," the old millionaire said in a whisper to his guest.

"Oh, yes, the writing is completely hidden from her gaze," the Westerner replied.

But it was as much as he could do to keep from smiling in the face of Mr. Lenbold, because he was sure that he had already detected how the trick was done, and it was so simple, and yet so old, that any veteran gambler would have "caught on" to the cheat in a moment.

"How easily a smart man can be fooled sometimes," was the thought in Freemont's mind.

Miss Holbrooke took hold of the slate with her left hand, grasped the pencil in her right, and in a peculiar, nervous way scribbled a line on the slate, then she sunk back in her chair, as if exhausted by the effort, closing her eyes with a deep sigh.

The millionaire eagerly advanced and grasped the slate.

Written upon the surface was the sentence:

"Yes, the woman you truly love will marry you."

"That answers the question, but it is a trifle ambiguous," the Westerner remarked, in a whisper, to the old gentleman.

And the disguised spy smiled as he spoke, for the answer plainly revealed to him that the spirit who had replied to the query could not lay claim to any supernatural knowledge.

"Do you wish to ask another question?" Mr. Lenbold inquired.

"No, I am quite satisfied," the spy returned.

And so he was—that the millionaire had



been the dupe of about as shallow a trick as had ever been played upon mortal man.

Then the old gentleman put some questions, addressed to his departed wife, and seemed greatly pleased with the answers.

Then he announced that the seance was ended.

"The trance only lasted about half an hour," Mr. Lenbold explained. "And as she is always greatly fatigued, I am careful not to put many questions."

Then the pair waited for the young lady to awaken from her "sleep," which she soon did, and as she appeared dazed, and evidently unwell, it is not surprising that she begged to be excused so she could retire to her own room.

"Most astonishing thing, eh, Mr. Freemont?" the millionaire said, after the lady had departed.

"Extremely astonishing!" the spy replied, dryly.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ENGLISHMAN'S FRIEND.

MR. LENBOLD was satisfied with the impression that the seance had produced upon his companion, for he had no suspicion that the other was laughing in his sleeve at the credulity of any one who could be so easily duped.

As the pair entered the hall they encountered Mr. St. Germaine about to go out.

"I am just going for a stroll up Broadway," the Englishman announced.

"Don't you feel like a walk, Mr. Freemont?" he continued.

"Yes, I don't mind," the Westerner replied.

"I do not suppose that you care to go out, Mr. Lenbold?" St. Germaine remarked.

"No, thank you, I prefer to remain at home at night. I seldom go out, except on some special occasion," the millionaire replied.

Then Lenbold repaired to his library, while the young men went out.

The two walked over to Broadway and then down that thoroughfare.

"I am very favorably impressed with this city, don't you know?" the Englishman remarked to his companion as they proceeded on their way.

"Beastly pavements, you know, and horribly dirty streets too, and a great many of the prominent buildings are not up to the mark; but the men are jolly fellows, and I have already made some very agreeable acquaintances."

"You are fortunate," Freemont observed.

"I have been in the city about as long as you have, and yet I don't know anybody outside of the Lenbold mansion."

"Well, you see, old fellow, I always was the deuce and all for making acquaintances, don't you know," the Englishman exclaimed in a very genial way.

"I am not particularly backward myself," the Westerner declared. "But, somehow, I have not managed to run across anybody to introduce me."

"Ah, yes; well, you see, my dear fellow, that makes all the difference in the world."

"As it happened, I was provided with letters of introduction to some capital fellows, and they did the honors in fine style, don't you know?"

"It is not strange then that you have made some pleasant acquaintances."

"Yes, a deuced lot of jolly fellows, I assure you, and though I am not particularly inclined to 'make the running,' yet I must declare that I have been going it at a pretty rapid pace; but what is the odds, you know, as long as you are happy, as the old saying declares."

"That is about right, I think."

"There is one gentleman in particular whose acquaintance I have made whom you really ought to meet, for he is by all odds one of the jolliest fellows that I ever encountered."

"One of the kind of chaps that these New Yorkers call a high roller," the Englishman explained.

"Oh, yes, I have heard of the breed."

"His name is Jack Beltier and he belongs to one of the old New York families; a fellow,

apparently, with no end of money, to judge from the way in which he spends his cash," St. Germaine explained.

"Of course he must go ahead in that way to be a high roller."

"Oh, he is a jolly fellow, and seems to think no more of money than if it could be picked up by the handful in the street; but I suppose that is natural to these rich, young New Yorkers, who have always had so much money at their disposal that they really don't seem to know the value of the cash."

"I suppose that is the case in many instances," the Westerner remarked.

"Undoubtedly! You see, my dear boy, this fellow is right in the social swim, you understand, independently rich on his own account; connected too by marriage with the Vanderbilts and the Astors and a lot of the rest of the swell families."

"Yes, yes, I see," the Westerner remarked, nodding his head as if he was duly impressed with the vast importance of the Englishman's friend.

But a suspicion had sprung up in Freemont's mind, and he mentally put the question:

"Now then, what is this man's little game that he is so persistently sounding the praises of this new-made friend of his?"

The reader will remember that the disguised spy did not have a good opinion of this St. Germaine.

He did not think the man was an Englishman at all, and when he made such persistent advances to him the spy encouraged him all he could, for he was anxious to see just what kind of a game the fellow was trying to play, for that he had some game on foot he was certain.

And this was the reason why he had so quickly joined the other in his stroll.

Of course the Englishman's declaration about his friend being related by marriage to the Vanderbilts and the Astors, would do very well to tell to any one who was not well-posted in regard to the notable families of the metropolis, but as Freemont knew all about them he was well aware that there was no "chappie" about town in New York who could justly claim a relationship.

By this time the two had arrived at the Hoffman House and as they came up to the door, out stepped a well-dressed, sleek-looking individual, with a round, plausible face—a man of about thirty-five or thirty-eight, but on account of his having a fresh, rosy complexion, and being smoothly-shaven he did not look to be within seven or eight years of his true age.

"Ah, my dear St. Germaine!" he exclaimed, advancing with outstretched hand.

"You are just the man I am looking for!"

"I am really delighted to see you, don't you know?" the Englishman replied, shaking hands with the other with a deal of warmth.

And then he introduced the Westerner.

As Freemont had conjectured when the man advanced, this was the "jolly fellow," the kin of the Vanderbilts and Astors, whom St. Germaine had described in such glowing colors.

It did not take the disguised bloodhound, so noted for his natural shrewdness, long to make up his mind in regard to this extremely affable gentleman.

He was of the tribe of Bunco.

The smooth-talking, plausible, insinuating fellows who address the guileless countryman, after a confederate has deftly learned his name, in the most familiar manner, usually representing themselves to be a relative of some prominent man in the destined victim's native town.

The wanderer from Wayback is delighted to meet a man who claims to be an old acquaintance in the great wilderness of bricks and mortar, overgrown New York.

And unless the stranger is unusually shrewd, the bunco man generally manages, by some little game or other, to get possession of the man's loose cash.

The spy was curious to see what the pair were up to, for now there was no doubt in his mind that the pretended Englishman was a crook of the first water, and that he was acting in concert with the bunco man.

True, it might be possible that he did not know what kind of a fellow the other was,

but the disguised spy was not inclined to take this view of the matter.

After the introduction was over, Mr. Beltier insisted upon his friends joining him in a bottle of wine, and the three all went into the Hoffman House saloon, the renowned "Art Gallery," so called on account of the lavish display of costly paintings upon the walls, probably about the most popular of all the metropolitan drinking-places.

After the wine was drank, Mr. Beltier announced that he felt like having a little sport with the "tiger."

"I have got a thousand cases in my pocket which I can just as well lose as not," he announced. "And I really feel as if I could win a small fortune to-night."

"Are you wid me?" he questioned.

"Oh, yes!" assented the others.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### IN THE DEN.

THE game was developing just as the disguised bloodhound anticipated.

He, supposed to be a wealthy rancher, had been selected for a victim.

Now then the pair were going to take him to some convenient place, where he might be relieved of his surplus cash.

As it happened, though, the Westerner only had some fifty-odd dollars in his pocket, so even if the gang got that it would hardly pay for the trouble.

But Freemont did not intend to humor the fellows by letting them win his money, and he flattered himself that he had sufficient knowledge of gambling games to be enabled to detect whether the place to which he was going was run on the square or not.

The spy had spent some months in one of the wild Western mining-camps, where all sorts of games ran "wide open," as the saying is, and so had had plenty of opportunities of studying sporting men and their ways.

The three went up Broadway for a few blocks, and then turned into one of the side streets and went on until they were within a couple of doors of Sixth avenue.

Then the jovial Mr. Beltier, who had made himself vastly entertaining with clever jokes and droll stories during the walk, ascended the steps of a plain, modest-looking three-storied brick house and rung the bell.

"This isn't first-class by any manner of means," the spy murmured to himself.

"This is not up to the level of Chicago, or even Denver, so I suppose I am going to be steered against the worst kind of a skin game."

It was a high-stoop house, the first one on the street from the corner, which was occupied by a liquor store, and the sharp-eyed spy noticed that the extension which came from the rear of the saloon joined the brick house, and he immediately jumped to the conclusion that there was a means of communication from the one to the other.

The reason for this was obvious: if the police made a raid on the gambling-house, the occupants could make their escape into the saloon.

The door was opened by a muscular, ugly-looking negro.

He carefully surveyed the three as they advanced to pass through the portal.

"It is all right, Jim!" exclaimed the smooth-spoken Mr. Beltier, as he perceived that the negro hesitated. "These are a couple of friends of mine."

"Yas, sah; dat is all right," the negro replied. "But de boss am drefful particular for de las' week, for dere's so many low-down, no-account spies hanging round."

The three passed through the doorway.

"Jest wait a minute, gen'lemen," the negro remarked, as he closed the door.

It was hardly necessary for the black to make the request, for the visitors found their progress barred by a massive door, which was peculiar from the fact that no knob was visible.

But when the negro stepped in front of the door it swung back on its hinges.

Evidently the black had touched a secret spring.

Beltier, after the party had passed through the door—which closed after they had got beyond it—led the way up a flight of stairs and into a room, neatly furnished, where gambling was going on briskly.



There was a faro-table and a roulette-wheel, with about a dozen gamblers apparently earnestly engaged in playing.

But the keen-eyed spy, after watching the proceedings for a few minutes, came to the conclusion that there were only five or six honest players in the room.

The rest were "cappers;" that is, men in the pay of the house who pretended to play in a reckless manner in order to lead the strangers on.

"I think I will try my luck at faro first," Beltier remarked, pulling out a fat roll of bills with the air of a man to whom money is no object.

"I suppose, Mr. Freemont, that you will take a dip into the game," he added in a persuasive way.

If the place had been run on the square, the disguised spy would not have hesitated to have risked a little cash just for the fun of the thing; but as it was, he felt sure that the honest player stood no chance at all, and he did not intend to be robbed of his money in any such bare-faced fashion.

"No, I have only a few dollars with me, for I did not calculate upon running into anything of this kind and so I did not come prepared," the Westerner explained.

"Oh, that is all right—you have got your check-book along, I suppose," the jovial Mr. Beltier remarked.

"The boss here will take my word for it that your checks are as good as wheat?"

"No, I never carry a check-book with me," Freemont replied.

Mr. Beltier had a truly remarkable command over his features but in spite of that fact the keen-eyed sleuth-hound could plainly distinguish that the man was disappointed.

"Go ahead if you want to!" St. Germaine exclaimed. "I have plenty of cash with me and I will be glad to lend you all you want!"

"Well, now, that is what I call a friendly offer!" Beltier exclaimed, pretending to be much impressed.

"I wish I could always be as lucky as to find some one with an open pocketbook when my funds run low," he continued.

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. St. Germaine, but I don't care to play," the Westerner replied in a careless way.

"I never did take much interest in this sort of thing anyway."

"There is nothing like it in the world to keep a man's blood stirring!" Beltier declared with the air of a desperate gamester.

Freemont could plainly perceive that both of his companions were disappointed because he would not play.

And as their specious words had failed to persuade him they went on another tack.

Beltier began to play and luck favored him apparently for he won largely.

Then St. Germaine pretended that the temptation of seeing his acquaintance gain so heavily was too much for him.

"Oh, come, old chap! this will not do, don't you know!" he exclaimed.

"It isn't the cheese for you to win all the money that there is in the room, and you really must give somebody else a chance!"

"Why, certainly!" Beltier replied. "There is plenty of room, and the bank is keeping open house, you know. Hop in soon as you like and win a small farm."

By this time the attention of all in the room was fixed on the lucky gamester.

St. Germaine pulled out his pocketbook with a great flourish.

"What is the limit, my dear sir?" he inquired of the dealer, as he invested in a stack of chips.

"No limit!" the gambler replied. "We are wide open to be busted if any man is lucky enough to be able to do the trick."

"If my luck keeps on for an hour or two the way it has commenced, I think the chances are big that I will give you a close call!" Beltier declared in a boasting way.

"That is just what we sit here for, gentlemen," the gambler said with the air of a philosopher.

"We are rich, and we come of wealthy parents; we don't think any more of a dollar and a half than a man does of his life!"

"There isn't any limit, gentlemen! Go in and bust the bank if you can."

"I am here to deal for every dollar that you sports care to put up!"

"That is the way to talk!" Beltier declared.

"This is life! It stirs a man's blood and makes him conscious that he is living."

"You had better take a stack of chips, Freemont, and wade in while luck is running against the bank," the bunco-man continued in a persuasive way.

But the Westerner was deaf to the voice of the charmer.

"You can have all the money you want from me," the Englishman urged. "A hundred—five hundred—or a thousand!"

"There is a liberal offer!" Beltier declared in accents of admiration.

"Oh, no; I'm afraid that I would only be a Jonah!" the Westerner declared.

"If I should come into the game now and queer your luck, neither one of you would ever forgive me, so I will stay out and have my fun in watching you two gather in the coin."

The pair were too experienced players at this sort of game to proceed further in persuasion, so they turned their attention to playing.

The Englishman was also lucky, and after the game proceeded for half an hour had accumulated a goodly number of chips.

But, strange to say, none of the honest gamesters seemed to be at all favored by fortune, although some of the men whom the disguised bloodhound readily identified as being connected with the gambling-house won a few small bets.

So it did not take long to satisfy the spy that he had come to a just conclusion when he suspected that this house was one of those crooked ones where the games were not played on the square, and any one who was foolish enough to bet would be surely fleeced of all the cash which they might be unwise enough to venture.

The pair tried to coax the Westerner to play a couple of times, but their persuasions had no effect, and after winning a couple of thousand or so of dollars apiece, the conspirators—for such the spy was now certain they were—gave up playing.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE STRANGER.

WHEN they proceeded to cash in their checks, the head gambler remarked:

"Ah, gentlemen, you ought to keep on playing when you are favored with such an extraordinary run of luck."

"Still, I don't suppose that it is wise for me to say anything, for I ought to be thankful that you have quit the game; if you had kept on, and your luck had held, you would, undoubtedly, have broken the bank."

"Well, we don't want to be hard on you; enough is as good as a feast!" Beltier replied.

"Yes, we will come again some other time, and carry off what we haven't got away with to-night!" St. Germaine declared, in a bantering way.

"All right, gentlemen, I will be glad to see you, and you will never find me squeal whether the bank wins or loses!" the boss gambler declared.

"But I hope you gentlemen will honor me by taking a drink with me before you depart?" he continued.

"We have a sideboard, with a choice assortment of liquors, in the front room, and a lunch if you feel inclined to take a bite."

Then the dealer called upon one of his assistants to take his place at the table, while he piloted his guests into the front apartment.

As the boss gambler had said, there was a small sideboard with a limited display of liquors, and a cheap lunch set out on a table by its side.

The elaborate "set-out" that the first class gaming-house always provides for the accommodation of its patrons was conspicuous by its absence.

The Westerner had cut his eye-teeth in regard to the great majority of the tricks and traps which are to be found in metropolitan cities for the benefit of the strangers within the gates.

And this hospitable invitation of the head gambler immediately made him suspicious.

As the gang had not managed to get any money out of him by inducing him to play, they were now, in their desperation, about

to try to dose him with a "knocker-cut," so as to be able to rob him!

In the crook's argot, as the flash language of the rascals is called, a "knocker-out" is a drink into which a powerful drug has been infused.

And it only requires a few seconds after the drink has been taken for the strong narcotic to produce its effect.

The drinker becomes stupefied—is not conscious of what is taking place, and so can be stripped of his valuables without trouble.

And the rascals have got this scheme so well arranged that there are plenty of instances where the knocker-out has been given in a glass of lemon-soda, or some other harmless temperance drink, and when the drugged man, after he recovers his senses, finding he has been stripped of his valuables, protests that he didn't take anything but a single glass of soda, his statement is received with derision.

The Westerner, being up to all tricks of this kind, when he followed the host into the front room, went with the idea that the rascals intended to administer a knocker-out, so he made up his mind to keep his eyes about him.

As long as he was careful to see that the tumbler from which he drank was perfectly clear, with no sediment in the bottom, and drank liquor from the same bottle that some of his companions patronized, there was little danger of his being drugged, for he did not think the rascals were desperate enough to administer the drug to one or both of his companions for the sake of getting at him.

As he had expected, the gambler addressed him first, requesting to know what he would take.

"Oh, I will have the same that the rest do," the Westerner replied, carelessly, and he picked up a tumbler as he spoke which he saw was empty and dry.

"A little whisky for me," Beltier remarked.

"Brandy will suit me better," the Englishman observed. "I haven't been long enough in this country to become accustomed to your national beverage, for at home, I seldom drink any whisky, excepting when I have chanced to make trips to Ireland or Scotland."

The boss gambler looked inquiringly at Freemont as he handed the bottles to the others.

"Well, really, I don't know which to take," the Westerner remarked, pretending to be undecided.

He noticed that the proprietor of the establishment had his hand half-way to a shelf, at the back of the sideboard, upon which stood an array of bottles, and he conjectured that if he had made a choice the man would have handed him one of the bottles instead of allowing him to fill his glass from one of those used by his companions.

"I will wait until I see the fluids in the glasses, and then I can make up my mind," he continued with a laugh.

He had his keen eyes on the face of the boss gambler as he spoke, although, apparently, he was not paying any attention to him, gazing at the display of liquors, and he noticed that a shade of disappointment passed over his features, but the expression was so slight and transient that if the disguised spy had not been on the watch for it he would never have seen it.

"Well, here goes, gentlemen!" Beltier exclaimed, as he poured a small supply of whisky into his glass.

The Englishman followed suit with the brandy, and he, too, only poured out a small drink.

It was plain to such a careful observer as this bloodhound in disguise that both these men were fellows who would never be apt to allow liquor to get the best of them.

As soon as the Englishman replaced the bottle of brandy on the sideboard, the Westerner laid hold of it.

"I think the brandy will suit me best!" he declared.

"Here is another brand which may be more to your taste, as it is older!" the boss gambler exclaimed, hastening to take one of the bottles from the back.

But as the Westerner anticipated just such a move as this, he headed it off by pouring the brandy out into his glass as quickly as he could.

"You are a little late!" Freemont declared.



"I am all fixed now, but I am just as much obliged to you, all the same!"

If the three had designed to drug the Westerner, as he suspected, the scheme had failed, but they were too cunning to allow their disappointment to be seen.

They all drank to each other's success, as if they had been boon companions for years and then the three departed.

When they got into the street, Beltier remarked:

"I wonder how the betting is on the Guttenburg races to-morrow? I sometimes take a little flyer at that track, and during the past month I have been lucky enough to pick up some pretty good things; one, a 60 to 1 shot, I managed to catch. I had a ten-dollar bill on the horse, and I caught six hundred."

"That was a regular windfall; but you can't do that often?" St. Germaine observed.

"Oh, no; such things are like angels' visits, few and far between," the high-roller replied.

"We can get the quotation in regard to the betting at the corner saloon, for it is a headquarters for all the racing and pool-room men," he continued.

"Ah, yes; let us go!" St. Germaine exclaimed. "I feel quite a curiosity to see how you manage this sort of thing in this country, don't you know."

"When I was at home I used to do considerable on the turf, although of late years I have rather got out of it," he continued. "But then you see, that was because I have been abroad so much, traveling on the Continent, and all that sort of thing, you know."

"I don't know much about racing, for we don't have much of it out West where I come from," Freemont observed.

Then the three proceeded to the saloon.

It was the same one which the Kentuckian, Andrew Jackson Boone, had visited, as described in the early chapters of our story.

It was now about eleven o'clock, and the saloon was well filled with customers, chiefly sporting men.

The Westerner was on his guard, and as he accompanied his companions he put the question to himself:

"What little game will they try next?"

By this time he had come to the conclusion that the Englishman was a rascal of the deepest dye, and he had invited him out for a walk with the deliberate intention of plundering him, through his pals, of what valuables he might have about his person.

Freemont expected that in the saloon some new variation of the knocker-out game might be tried.

He knew this sporting saloon by reputation, but was not aware that it was run strictly on the square, and that the proprietor would not allow any crooked games in his place.

The betting quotations were given on a blackboard, and the three joined the throng who were busy in looking at the board, and discussing the qualifications of the horses.

In the group was a man who immediately attracted the attention of the trained eyes of the experienced sleuth-hound, for there was something about him entirely different from the appearance of the rest.

A common, ordinary, every-day sort of man would never have made this discovery, for there wasn't anything suspicious-looking about the man in any way.

He was about the medium size, well dressed with a smoothly-shaven face, and a very dark complexion, which with his jet-black hair, the locks of which, though cut short, betrayed a tendency to curl, gave him a decidedly foreign appearance.

After carefully examining the man for a few minutes, the Westerner became satisfied that he was on the watch for somebody.

"Can it be possible that it is another blood-hound in disguise here on professional business?" Freemont murmured to himself, after he had carefully surveyed the gentleman.

Then a quick gleam of light shot from the eyes of the stranger, as they rested on a black-headed man who had just entered the saloon.

It was the fellow who had called himself Black Bill.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE ATTACK.

THE new-comer sauntered up to the blackboard, and made one of the group congre-

gated before it. For a few minutes he apparently studied the odds offered on the horses, but after a moment or so the Westerner came to the conclusion that the man was secretly watching him.

"Now, what the deuce does this mean?" the disguised spy murmured to himself.

"There isn't surely anything about me to indicate to a dull-looking fellow of this kind that I am not exactly what I represent?"

"Can it be that this chap is one of the gang to which this Professor Bunco belongs, and that he, or this false Englishman, has managed to give the man a secret signal by means of which they have attracted his attention to me?"

"And if this is correct, what little game are they up to now?"

The disguised spy could not help laughing in his sleeve at the thought that while the black-bearded stranger was watching him, the man was totally unconscious that he, in turn, was watched.

"Wheels within wheels!" Freemont muttered.

Then Beltier looked at his watch.

"Hello! it is after eleven, and I have an appointment at half-past with a friend of mine at the Manhattan Club!" he exclaimed.

"I trust you gentlemen will excuse me. I really regret that I am obliged to hurry away."

"I would have liked to have stayed with you and made a night of it; but we can meet again."

"Certainly, old fellow! don't mind us, you know," St. Germaine exclaimed.

Then Beltier hurried away like a man who hadn't a moment to lose, and the Westerner, who had his eyes on the black-bearded man, noticed that after a moment or two he also took his departure.

"He is one of the gang, I reckon," was the Westerner's opinion.

"And the chances are great that they are going to have a meeting outside in order to arrange some neat little plan to get at me."

While busy with these reflections, Freemont had for a moment taken his eyes from the tawny-faced stranger, and now when he looked for him the man had disappeared.

"It is a horse to a hen that he is shadowing the black-bearded fellow," the Westerner muttered to himself.

"What do you say to having a little more brandy and then going home?" the Englishman inquired.

"I'm agreeable!"

By this time the Westerner had come to the conclusion that there wasn't any danger of crooked work in the knocker-out line being attempted in this saloon.

The patronage was so good that it kept two barkeepers busy, besides a boy cashier, and as everything about the place indicated prosperity, it was not reasonable to suppose that the proprietor would have to "stand in" with a gang of thieves in order to be able to make a living.

"What do you say to having brandy and soda this time?" St. Germaine asked.

"That is the average Englishman's favorite tippie, you know."

"I have no objection to trying it," Freemont replied, speaking like one to whom the compound was a stranger; but, as the Westerner had spent nearly two years in England, there were few of the manners and customs, the eatables and drinkables dear to the heart of the Englisher, with which he was not acquainted.

The brandy and soda was ordered, and, as Freemont had anticipated, it was served in such a way as to show conclusively that everything was all right, and it was not possible for any crooked work to be done.

They disposed of the drinks and then left the saloon.

"I suppose the best way will be to go through the cross street and up Broadway," the Englishman suggested.

"Yes, I should think so."

The two then proceeded up the cross street in the direction of the main thoroughfare.

It was now well on toward midnight, and the street was deserted.

Not a soul was visible on the block when the two turned from broad Sixth avenue into the narrow way.

Few lights could be distinguished in any

of the houses on either side of the street, for almost all the inmates were buried in slumber.

The couple proceeded for about a third of the block, when the Englishmen suddenly stopped short and exclaimed:

"By Jove! I have lost my pocketbook, don't you know!"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes; it only had a few dollars in it—my small change, as you might say, for I always carry my bills in a long wallet in my breast-pocket."

"I took it out to pay for the drinks in the saloon, and I thought I put it back in my pantaloons pocket, but I must have made a mistake and dropped the deuced thing."

"It is unfortunate!"

"I think I will go right back! Some one has probably picked it up, and if the finder is at all honest, he would hand it over to one of the bartenders."

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly."

"Would you mind waiting for me? It will only take me a few moments to go and make the proper inquiries, you know."

"All right! I will wait for you."

"I will be back in a jiffy, don't you know!" St. Germaine declared.

"Take your time!"

"It can't occupy but a few minutes!" the Englishman declared, and then he hurried down the street toward the saloon.

"Now then what is the meaning of this?" the Westerner soliloquized, as soon as his companion got out of hearing.

"Is this little move made so as to give the gang a chance to get at me without being hampered by the presence of a witness?"

"That is probably the game, but if it comes to a fight I reckon they will find that in an affair of that kind Jack will be as good as his master!"

The Englishman had selected a particularly dark part of the street to leave his companion, but as the Westerner was on his guard he did not care for this.

"No matter how smart the fellows may be, I defy them to get at me without my being ready to receive them!" the disguised spy declared.

He had a medium-sized revolver in the right-hand pocket of the loose sack-coat which he wore, and his first move after the Englishman departed was to assure himself that the weapon was ready for action.

It was no pop-gun, like the small revolver usually carried by the average city man, but a good working tool, using a large ball, and the young man felt a grim satisfaction when he reflected that a single one of the leaden pills, put in the proper place, would certainly lay out the strongest man.

It was natural for one placed in the situation that he was now in to stand with his back to Broadway, so as to watch the departing companion.

And this was exactly what the Westerner did.

Under these circumstances he suspected that if an attack was made the assailants would come from the direction of Broadway, anticipating to take him by surprise in the rear.

And so while he, apparently, was gazing intently in the direction of Sixth avenue, yet he was keeping a close watch over his shoulder, so that no one could steal a march on him from behind.

What he anticipated came to pass.

The black-bearded fellow made his appearance from the concealment of a stoop, about fifty feet up the street, and came stealthily down in his rear with the noiseless steps of a tiger-cat stealing in on his prey.

"Aha! the game is just what I expected!" the Westerner murmured to himself in grim satisfaction as soon as he noted the appearance of the man.

"Only one fellow to cope with, and although he is a good-sized ruffian, yet I don't think I will have to use my revolver to get away with him."

"Fists will be plenty good enough to convince him that he has woke up the wrong passenger if he attempts to tackle me!"

And the young fellow chuckled quietly to himself as he reflected upon the surprise which he had in store for the black-bearded ruffian.

The man came on with such noiseless steps that it was apparent that he had put on a pair



of rubbers, so as to be able to approach his destined victim without making a sound to put him on his guard.

The Westerner was apparently staring down the street, in the direction of the avenue, but just as the Englishman disappeared around the corner the young man suddenly turned.

The black-bearded fellow was within a couple of yards of him when he made the sudden turn; just as the Westerner turned the ruffian made a jump forward and, with a short sand-club—the favorite weapon of the night prowler, for with a single stroke an assailed man can be stretched senseless upon the earth—aimed a terrific blow at the Westerner's head.

The young man was on the watch for just such a movement though, so he was able to dodge the blow without any trouble, and as the fellow passed him he gave the man a terrible thump in the neck.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A LESSON IN BOXING.

ALTHOUGH no one, from the looks of the Westerner, would have supposed him to be possessed of any extra muscular powers, yet his blow was evidently delivered with a great amount of force, for it sent the black-bearded fellow reeling up against the iron railings which guarded the basement entrance of the house in front of which the encounter took place.

Had it not been for the railings, the man would have gone headlong to the ground.

As it was, the sand-club was forced from his hands by the violence of the shock, and, as it happened, it went through the iron gate which protected the entrance to the basement door, so the weapon was lost to him.

The ruffian was astounded.

He had expected to take the Westerner by surprise, and anticipated that the job would be an easy one.

One single lick on the head with the sand-club, and that would end the matter.

The man was furious with rage at his "warm" reception.

The violent blow did not warn him that the man whom he had attacked was an uncommonly good one.

Although a big and powerful fellow, he had no idea of the boxer's art, and though he was surprised that a slightly-built chap should be able to hit so hard a blow, yet he thought it was due to accident—merely a chance stroke.

It only took a moment for the big fellow to recover from the effects of the blow, but as he straightened up, a new-comer appeared on the scene, making his appearance from the shadows of one of the neighboring stoops.

The Westerner immediately jumped to the conclusion that it was a confederate of the black-bearded man, and he reached for his revolver.

If he only had to face one man, he was not afraid to trust to his fists, but if there were two, then a weapon would be needed.

But as soon as Freemont got a good look at the new-comer, he saw that it was the dusky-faced stranger who had been keeping so close a watch on the black-bearded fellow in the saloon.

"Oho! it is you, is it?" the Westerner muttered to himself.

"To my thinking then the odds are big that you are much more likely to prove a friend than a foe!"

And hardly had the thought passed through his mind when the dark-faced stranger, apparently anticipating that the Westerner might jump to the conclusion that he was a confederate of the ruffian, hastened to reassure him.

"It is all right, neighbor, don't be afraid. I am a friend, not a foe, and if you need help to whale this 'tarnal cuss I am the man who can give it!"

It was the Guttenburg sport, Andrew Jackson Boone, who spoke.

He was carrying out the plan which he had announced to the police officials he should adopt.

By shaving off his luxuriant mustache, staining his skin with a walnut dye, and putting on a black wig, he had so succeeded in changing his personal appearance that he

had hobnobbed now for days with men who had been his intimate acquaintances, and they had no suspicions that this stranger, who claimed to hail from New Orleans, was Andy Boone, White-hat Kilduff's right-hand man.

He was as stanch on the trail of the man he hated as the great gray prairie wolves on the track of the wounded buffalo, the drippings of whose blood urged them on.

And the man was like the beasts too in another respect.

If he succeeded in overtaking the game, it was certain that he would be equally as merciless as the gaunt and hungry wolves.

"I am much obliged, stranger, for your offer of assistance, but I reckon I can handle this fellow myself if he chooses to come at me with his fists, and if he prefers a weapon I am able for him too in that line, I think!" the Westerner declared.

The big fellow was terribly enraged.

Not only had his prey escaped him but he was now adding insult to injury.

His blood was up and he wanted satisfaction.

But a highway robber, foiled in his attack, could hardly, with a good grace, demand satisfaction from the destined victims because he had been lucky enough to escape from the trap.

The first thing then for him to do was to make out that he was no common, "low-down" street robber.

So, when he straightened himself up, he took a good look at the young man and pretended to be much surprised.

"Hello! who in blazes are you? You are not Jimmy Smith?" he exclaimed.

"No, that isn't my handle," Freemont replied.

"Well, Jimmy Smith is the man I am after!" the fellow declared.

"Jimmy Smith, eh?"

"Yes, sir, you bet your sweet life on that! We had a growl this evening in the gin-mill on the corner there, and as he had his crowd with him, he sassed me as no man ever sassed me before, but I told him that the first time I run across him when he didn't have his gang at his back, I would do him up so that his own mother wouldn't know him!"

And as the man spoke he doubled up his fists and shook them in a menacing way in the air.

"Oh, and you pitched on me, under the impression that I was Smith?" the Westerner asked, in a tone of decided incredulity.

"You can bet your sweet life that that is the how of it!"

"Oh, no, this is a ghost story!"

"Oh, yes, too thin entirely—the thinnest yarn that I have heard for a year!" Freemont continued.

"What do you mean?" the ruffian growled, in an angry way.

"Just what I said!" the Westerner returned, promptly.

"You wasn't looking for Jimmy Smith, or Jimmy anybody else?"

"Oh, I wasn't?"

"Not by a jugful!" Freemont ejaculated.

"You didn't care the snap of your finger who the man was, so long as he looked as if he had wealth enough on his person to pay you for the trouble of going through him."

"That is a lie, out and out!" the big fellow cried.

"And you'd better be careful what you say, too, for I may take it into my head to make you eat your words!" the ruffian continued, in a threatening manner.

"What I ought to do is to call a policeman and have you locked up on a charge of attempted highway robbery!" the Westerner declared, sternly.

"But as long as I upset your little game, I don't really care to take the trouble to appear in court against you."

"Oh, you are mighty kind," the ruffian sneered. "Do you want me to go down on my knees and thank you for being so nice and merciful?"

"No, no, you need not take the trouble to do that," the Westerner replied, in a tone full of contempt.

"You can take your ugly face out of this as soon as you like, and the sooner the better, as far as I am concerned."

"I have beaten your game and am content to let you go, for I know very well that sooner or later you will get in a hole, and

be sent up the river at the expense of the State."

"Say, you give me a thump in the neck!" the ruffian declared, angrily. "Do you suppose I am going to stand that sort of work?"

"What are you going to do about it?" Freemont asked; changing his position a little as he spoke.

An old boxing-master would have understood that he was getting ready for an attack, but the black-bearded fellow, being a dull and ignorant "chump," had no suspicion that the other was preparing for the fray.

"What am I going to do?" the ruffian exclaimed, in an arrogant way.

"Why, I am going to do you up in such a style that, after I get through, you will have an idea that a brick house has fallen on you!"

And the black-bearded fellow threw himself in a pugilistic attitude as he finished the sentence.

Hardly had the last word been uttered when with wonderful quickness the right arm of the Westerner shot out, and he managed the stroke so that every pound of weight that he possessed seemed to be put in the blow.

The small but exceedingly muscular fist of Freemont struck the black-bearded man right between the eyes, and as he had his heels together in a clumsy way, he went over on his back as if he had been shot.

Down he went, and so awkwardly that the back of his head came in contact with the sidewalk with force enough to cause a myriad of stars to dance before his eyes.

It was a clean "knock-out," as a boxer would say, for it was over ten seconds before the man rose slowly to his feet.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### AN EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENCE.

THE ruffian had been in a goodly number of "scrapes," as the boys say, in his time; for he was of a quarrelsome nature, and being a big fellow was inclined to be arrogant and overbearing, but never in all his experience had he ever received such a blow.

He staggered like a drunken man for a few moments after getting on his feet, and was obliged to take hold of the railing to support himself.

He was dazed and his head felt so queer that he imagined it had begun to swell and was already half as large again as it ought to be.

"Time!" exclaimed the Guttenburg sport, who had hugely enjoyed the discomfiture of the ruffian.

"Come up to the scratch now, and take your gruel like a man!" Boone continued.

"By rights the fight is ended now, for you got a clean knock-out, but I reckon this gentleman is willing to let it go without claiming the fight."

"We will allow, you know, that the time-keeper got rattled and didn't keep a correct account of how the minutes went."

The black-bearded fellow gazed at the speaker for a moment, still keeping his position by the railing, which afforded him support, as though he was afraid that if he moved away he would not be able to stand.

Then he passed his right hand across his eyes, as though he imagined that there was blood which obscured his vision.

But there wasn't any.

The blow had not broken the skin, but it had raised a lump, for the man's face was gross and fat, and he had a pair of "most beautiful" black eyes, as an admirer of the prize-ring would say.

He looked at the back of his hand, upon taking it down, as though he expected to see it covered with blood, apparently was astonished at not beholding any for he shook his big head in a doubtful way.

"Ah, come now! have done with this monkey business!" the Guttenburg sport exclaimed in a tone of supreme contempt.

"How long do you suppose a man is going to wait for you? You would have been counted out three times if exact time had been kept on you."

"Don't make any mistake about this matter now," Boone continued. "It isn't three minutes' rest and one minute rounds, you know, but just the contrary!"



"I think I am through," the big fellow responded in a sulky way, beginning now to feel a little like himself, the effects of the blow passing away.

"Is one round enough for you?" the Westerner asked in a tone full of contempt.

"For a fellow who talked as loudly and lavishly as you did this is a surprising conclusion," Freemont added.

And it must be recorded that the Westerner was a little disappointed because his opponent would not face the music again.

So strange is human nature!

It is like the dog after the taste of blood.

All the animal in the composition of the disguised spy had been aroused, and the fierce heat of battle was swelling his veins, so that he craved another chance at his foe.

Possibly never since this world began was there a stranger nature domiciled in the breast of a human than the one which this untiring bloodhound possessed.

One moment as gentle, tender and loving as the tenderest of womankind, and the next with the wild rage of battle surging in the veins as fiercely as it ever raged within the forms of the bloodthirsty sea-kings who bathed the raven banner in crimson on many a sea-coast.

"I know when I have got enough!" the man declared in a sulky way.

"I s'pose that you are one of those amateur champion boxers, maybe," he continued. "And you have been used to going in for knock-outs until you are about as good as a regular professional who makes his living by fighting."

"I have always been considered to be a good man at a scrap, but I ain't no regular boxer, and when I come to stack up ag'in' one it stands to reason that I don't stand no show."

"Oh, yes, you stand a show, all right—a show to be struck by lightning!" the Guttenburg man exclaimed with a fine sense of humor.

"You think you are blamed funny, don't you?" the ruffian growled.

"The trouble with you is that you have got a yellow streak in you!" Boone declared.

"You are not dead game, you know. When you get the gaff and feel the steel, you want to fly the pit!"

"The thought immediately occurs to you that it is time you wasn't there!"

"It is all right!" the big fellow observed, sullenly. "I am a licked man, but maybe I will see you again some time."

And after uttering this covert threat, the fellow turned and slunk up the street toward Broadway.

"He is a bad egg if ever there was one!" the Guttenburg sport exclaimed, as he watched the man hastening onward in the gloom.

"Yes, the fellow is a thorough-paced scoundrel," Freemont asserted. "There isn't any doubt about that. A ruffian and a bully, but, as you said, with a yellow streak, and you can't warrant a man of that kind to stand the steel."

"You handled him beautifully!" the Guttenburg sport declared, in an admiring tone.

"Yes, because I know how to use my fists and he doesn't; not only that, but he is one of the men who will never learn, for he is too dull and clumsy," the Westerner remarked, in a contemptuous way.

"You see, I made the mistake of thinking that because he was a big man he would just slaughter you, and that is the reason that I hastened to come to your assistance."

"If I had known, though, that you could handle him without any trouble, I would not have interfered, for I have my reasons for not wishing the fellow to know that there is such a man in existence as myself."

"I detected that you were watching the man in the saloon before you followed him out."

"You don't mean it?" exclaimed Boone, surprised and decidedly annoyed.

"Well, now, I am surprised. I thought I was doing the job so well that no one could detect the game I was playing."

The young man laughed.

"Oh, you did the work well enough," he said. "I don't believe that it would have been possible for any one else to detect that you had your eyes on him."

"I have done a little of the shadowing

business myself, and that is why, I presume, I was able to catch on to what you were doing."

"Is that so? Well, now, perhaps you can give me a few points?"

"I will be glad to do so if I can."

"I am after a certain man— Say, I don't mind if I put you up to all the points of the game, for I don't believe that you are the kind of man to give the thing away!" the Guttenburg sport exclaimed, in a burst of confidence.

"You can trust me, although I am a stranger to you, for I give you my word I will not betray your secrets, and if I can be of service to you, I will be pleased to assist."

"Did you ever hear of a Western bank-robber and desperado, called William Black, or Black Bill?"

"Yes, I remember to have read something about the man in the newspapers, for the name is familiar, but his name and that he is a hard case is about all I recollect."

Then Boone gave a brief description of how he had become interested in the man, and the lack of success which he had met with on two occasions when he, in company with the two police-officers, thought they had the scoundrel in a corner, and felt sure they would trap him.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SPORT CONFIDES IN THE SPY.

THE acute Westerner meditated over the matter a moment, after the Guttenburg man finished the recital.

"This is a very strange affair," Freemont remarked.

"Yes, it beats Satan himself!" Boone declared. "Twice, you see, I thought I had him, and I will be hanged if he didn't manage to slip out of the net, somehow, and blame me if I can make out how he managed to do it."

"He is evidently a first-class rascal, and it isn't an easy matter to trap a man of that sort, particularly if he happens to be provided with plenty of money."

"I begin to think that you are right, but I didn't imagine in the commencement, when I started in to engineer this thing, that it would be so hard to trap him."

"The man has one great advantage, although some of the detectives in the South and West may know him, these New York sleuth-hounds do not, and that fact hampers them greatly when they try to catch the fellow."

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly."

"When you thought you had him trapped at the Astor House, you found this Englishman who was with me to-night in the room?" the Westerner inquired.

Already his active and acute mind had formed a theory in regard to the situation.

"Yes."

"And the next time, down in the slums, when you sprung the snare to catch your man, it was this big fellow, whom I had the fight with just now, who presented himself and said his name was Black Bill?"

"Correct!"

"In the saloon to-night when this black-bearded ruffian came in, were you able to detect whether any secret signs passed between him and the Englishman?"

"No, there wasn't any, I am sure of it!" the Guttenburg sport asserted, positively.

"You are quite certain about this, for it seems to me that it is a very important point."

"That is just exactly the way I looked at it, and as I felt certain the moment this false Black Bill made his appearance that he and the Englishman would communicate with each other, that I was on the watch to detect any exchange of signals, but neither one took the slightest notice of the other."

"It is very strange."

"You bet your life it is!"

"I had an idea that both of the men were members of Black Bill's gang and were acting in concert."

"Just what I thought."

"I have a suspicion that as this desperado found the West getting too hot to be comfortable he conceived the bold idea of coming to New York, with a number of rascals, whom he knew he could depend upon, and levying toll on the property of the New Yorkers."

"It really looks as if that was the game," the other assented.

"He is playing for big money, but if you and I join forces perhaps we can trap him."

"Will you go in to give me a hand?" the Guttenburg man exclaimed, highly delighted.

"Yes, as long as I have become so strangely mixed up in the affair, I don't mind if I do take an active part in the game."

"I will be much obliged," the sport declared. "And I don't mind telling you—and I don't want you to think I am trying to flatter you, for I am not—that from what little I have seen of you to-night, I have got the idea that you would be apt to be mighty useful in a case of this kind."

"I am indebted to you for your good opinion," the Westerner responded with a smile.

The sport from Guttenburg little thought that he was complimenting one of the greatest man-hunters who had ever brought a criminal to justice in this or any other country.

Freemont then briefly explained who he was and where he was staying.

"Well, my right name is Andrew Jackson Boone, and I have charge of White-hat Kilduff's racing stable at Guttenburg, but since I have put on these togs I call myself Archibald Langley, and claim to hail from New Orleans. I am a young sharp from the South, and have a room up-stairs in the hotel over the saloon."

"If at any time you should want to see me just drop into the gin-mill and ask for Archy Langley, and the tumbler-jugglers can tell you whether I am around or not."

"And if you should need to communicate with me, come to Mr. Lenbold's house on Fifth avenue, opposite the Park."

"Yes, I know the house," the sport replied.

"Well, I'll go back to the saloon, take a drink for a night-cap, and go to bed."

"You will wait here for the Englishman I suppose?" Boone asked.

"Yes, and I do not doubt that gentleman will be very much astonished when he returns and finds that I am all right—that is, if he had an idea that I was to be attacked, and I do not doubt but what he did, for it appears to me as if he deliberately led me into the trap, and then invented an excuse to go back to the saloon so as to leave me alone and afford that black-bearded scoundrel a chance to get at me."

"It certainly does look like it," the sport coincided.

"Well, good night to you, and good luck to your plans."

"We will try to deserve it," the young man replied.

Then Boone took his departure, while Freemont leaned against the railings and waited for the Englishman to come.

"I do not think there is any doubt that this fellow has gained admission to the Lenbold mansion with the idea of playing the biggest kind of a game," the disguised spy soliloquized.

"Black Bill is somewhere in the background arranging the wires," he continued, in a thoughtful way.

"It is plainly a well-organized band, and they are going in for big game."

"Now then, what is the first move?"

"Come the old game of the decoy, eh?"

And the speaker meditated over the matter for a few moments.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, nodding his head in a decided way.

"That is as good a game as can be arranged, but the matter must be carefully planned, so that when the rascals learn there is a chance to secure a rich booty, they will not be able to suspect that the plunder is but a bait to lure them into a trap."

The appearance of the Englishman, turning the corner, put an end to the Westerner's meditations.

St. Germaine acted queerly after getting past the circle of light thrown by the corner window of the saloon.

Freemont was standing in the shade of a stoop so that he was hidden from view.

After advancing about twenty-five or thirty feet up the street, the Englishman halted and peered into the gloom before him, at the same time bending his head as though listening intently.



The spy chuckled quietly to himself. "Alas!" he murmured, "he feels sure that the gang have succeeded in getting in their work, and he thinks that I am lying disabled somewhere in the street."

"He listens under the belief that he may hear me groan."

"How sadly disappointed he will be when he discovers that I am all right."

And again the disguised sleuth-hound chuckled gleefully.

Then St. Germaine advanced, and when he came within a dozen yards or so of where the Westerner lurked in the shadow of the house, Freemont stepped forward.

The Englishman started as though he had suddenly been confronted by a ghost.

"What is the matter?" Freemont asked, taking a keen enjoyment in the perplexity of St. Germaine.

The Englishman was evidently a most excellent actor though, for he speedily recovered from his surprise.

"Well, really, don't you know, you rather startled me," St. Germaine explained.

"I looked for you after turning the corner, and as I didn't see you anywhere I come to the conclusion that you had become tired of waiting for me and had gone on."

"Oh, no; I waited for you all right. Did you get your pocket-book?"

"Yes, I recovered it. A young fellow found the pocket-book and immediately turned the article over to one of the barkeepers, and, of course, I had to stand treat, so I was detained a little longer than I expected."

And all the time that the Englishman was speaking his eyes were roaming up the street.

The disguised spy guessed that he had come to the conclusion that his pals had been detained and he was looking to see if they were approaching, so Freemont thought it would be as well to let the man know that his little game had not worked.

"I had quite an adventure, by the way, during your absence," the spy remarked, as the two proceeded on their way.

And he related what had occurred.

The Englishman was amazed, and the Westerner could see that it taxed all his powers of dissimulation to conceal his annoyance.

"A very remarkable affair, and it was really wonderful, don't you know, that you succeeded in getting the best of the fellow, for you don't look as if you were much of a fighter," St. Germaine remarked, surveying his companion with a puzzled expression.

"Well, I'm no giant, but I possess considerable strength, and I know how to handle myself," the disguised spy explained.

"Ah, yes, I see, but it is really astonishing though."

There was but little more conversation between the two, and after arriving at the millionaire's mansion they bid each other good-night and parted.

"I must keep my eyes on this Westerner, for there is something about him that I do not understand," St. Germaine declared.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE SPY EXPLAINS.

ON the day which followed the one on which occurred the events related in our last chapter, Mr. Lenbold informed the Westerner at the breakfast-table that he had thought of a fine chance for a man to invest a little money, and if he cared to look into the matter, he, Mr. Lenbold, would be pleased to explain the affair to him in the library after breakfast.

Freemont replied that he would be glad to hear about the affair.

Of course the spy understood that this was merely a device of the millionaire to secure a private interview with him without exciting comment.

After the meal was finished, the two repaired to the library.

The millionaire took care to close the door carefully, so as to be sure that no one could play the listener.

"Mr. Freemont, I wanted to have a little talk with you about this seance which you attended," the old gentleman began. "You have not said much of anything about the matter, but I fancied from your manner that you were not particularly impressed with the manifestation."

"Well, to tell you the exact truth, Mr.

Lenbold; I was impressed with the belief that it was a humbug from beginning to end!" the young man declared, in the frankest manner.

"Is it possible that it produced that impression upon you?" exclaimed the millionaire, evidently much astonished.

"Yes, and the trick could be worked in such a simple way that almost anybody could perform it."

"You surprise me."

"Let me explain the matter to you. We will assume that this magazine is the slate," and as he spoke, the Westerner took one of the monthly magazines from the table.

"I think this young lady has borrowed the trick from the short-card sharp—the professional gambler who goes in to skin his opponent from the start."

"For a greenhorn to play cards with one of these men is sheer madness, no matter how good a player he may be, nor how good cards he may hold."

"The other man is a human shark and is bound to secure his prey."

"One of the most common tricks is to use the 'spy.'"

"This is a small mirror, sometimes no bigger than a ten-cent piece, and if the gambler is a sharp-eyed chap, he often wears the spy upon his finger set in a seal ring, the mirror concealed beneath the stone, and the pressing of a spring causes the stone to open like the cover of a watch-case, exposing the mirror beneath."

"Now, then, Mr. Lenbold, supposing that this magazine is the slate, with the writing upon the under side, and I hold it as the young lady did, do you not perceive that if I had a spy upon my knee, or in a ring on my left hand, it would be an extremely easy matter for me to read the writing upon the slate?"

The millionaire was astounded.

He stroked his beard, shook his head in a thoughtful way for a few moments, while his face showed that he was deeply puzzled by the problem which the disguised spy had so suddenly presented to him.

Then he said:

"Really, this supposition of yours is a most surprising one."

"You can see that the trick could be easily performed in this way?"

"Oh, yes; no doubt about that," the old gentleman assented.

"Now that you have explained the matter, I see that it is like all tricks of the kind—so extremely simple that it is amazing that any one should not be able to guess almost immediately upon witnessing the operation how it was done."

And from the way in which the millionaire spoke it was plainly to be perceived that he did not relish the thought that he had been imposed upon by so shallow a trick.

"Yes; the game is an extremely simple one," the Westerner remarked. "And it is truly wonderful how successful it generally is."

"You do not think there is any doubt about the matter?" the old gentleman asked.

"Not the slightest!" Freemont declared.

"The manifestation is a trick from beginning to end, and the spirits have no more to do with it than either you or I."

"And yet I have certainly received some information which it does not seem possible could be known to this young lady," Mr. Lenbold remarked in a thoughtful way.

"She has been an inmate of your house for some time?" the disguised spy asked in his shrewd, direct style.

"Oh, yes."

"Could it not have been possible for her during this period to have acquired information enough to enable her, with some shrewd guesses, to produce this impression upon you?"

The millionaire pondered over the matter for a few moments. From his knitted brows and the general expression upon his face it was plain that he was not well pleased.

That the crafty old financier had a weak spot in his composition was evident, or else he could never have been made a dupe of so easily.

But now that the Westerner had shown him how easy it was for the slate manifestations to be produced by any ordinary trickster his natural shrewdness asserted itself.

"Yes, you are correct, sir, I think, in that

assumption," Mr. Lenbold declared. "She could have got at the facts, and I must admit that I have been completely deceived."

"When I put my question at the seance," the spy said, "I formed it in such a way that if there had been any supernatural agency at work, the spirits would have detected immediately that I had laid a trap for them, but the trick was not suspected, and so I was satisfied it was a human who was working the oracle."

"Ah, yes, I see, but what is the object of this proceeding?"

"To make herself valuable to you. I assume that you had your attention directed to spiritualism, and when she discovered that you were taking an interest in the matter, the thought came to her to pretend to be a medium in order to win your favor."

"I would not have believed that the girl could be capable of playing such a part!" the old gentleman declared.

"It is my suspicion that she is an uncommonly deep one!" Freemont asserted.

"And what is more I think she is a member of a well-organized band of rascals who have made up their minds to plunder you."

"Is it possible?" the millionaire exclaimed in amazement.

"That is my thought."

"But she has been with me a long time, and I never had reason to suspect that she was not thoroughly upright in every way."

"Well, it may be that I am not correct in thinking she is connected with the band, but I am pretty well satisfied that there is a gang of rascals who think they can get at some of your wealth and I want you to help me lay a trap for them."

"Certainly! of course, I shall be glad to do so!" the millionaire declared, promptly.

One of the peculiarities of the once great railway king was that he had never been known to show mercy to an opponent in a business transaction or to an employee detected in a dishonest act.

He was as pitiless as death.

"My idea is to arrange the matter so that the rascals, if they have a spy in the house, as I shrewdly suspect, will get the notion into their heads that there is a fine chance for them to make a good haul here without much danger of being caught."

"Ah, yes, I see."

"If I can succeed in arranging matters so they will make the attempt, I will stand a good chance to catch them."

"Yes, yes, undoubtedly!"

"Now I presume that you are not in the habit of keeping much money in the house?"

"Oh, no! Still there are plenty of valuables here which rogues could turn into cash if they could succeed in getting hold of them."

"My plate is all solid silver, and cost me a deal of money, then my daughter has a large amount of valuable jewelry," the old gentleman explained.

"Yes, I made my calculations in regard to these things, but they do not appeal to the cupidity of the average rascal like a large sum of money."

"I presume not."

"When crooks succeed in getting away with plate and jewelry, they are obliged to visit a fence—that is, a receiver of stolen goods, you understand—in order to get rid of the valuables."

"Yes, I comprehend."

"And these fences are never willing to give over a quarter of what the stolen goods are really worth."

"I do not mean a quarter of the cost value, bear in mind, but a quarter of what the silver, or jewelry, is worth when melted down," the spy explained.

"I see, and I perceive that in this peculiar branch of business, as is the case in many other lines in legitimate affairs, the middleman is the fellow who makes the most money out of the transaction."

"Exactly! that is correct. The men who do the work do not get the lion's share."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE MILLIONAIRE'S HALLUCINATION.

"THAT is the way the world is constituted," the millionaire remarked, with the air of a philosopher.

"My idea is to arrange the matter so as to present to the rascals the temptation of a large sum of money—ready cash—which, if



they succeed in getting hold of, they will realize the full value, without being obliged to go to a fence."

"I comprehend, and I can readily understand that if the matter is arranged in that way, the rascals would be much more eager to jump at the bait."

"Now then, the important thing is to fix the matter so that the gang will not suspect that a trap has been set to catch them."

"Of course! that goes without saying!" the millionaire declared.

"The sum must be large, and the reason for your keeping it in your safe a plausible one, so that there will not be anything to arouse suspicion that everything is not all right."

"Let me see," and the old gentleman caressed his beard as he reflected upon the matter.

"The first point is for me to receive the money in such a way that it will appear like a regular business transaction."

"Yes, that is correct."

"The next, for the affair to take place in such a manner that the members of my household will have a knowledge of it."

"That is right."

"Then there must be a good reason for me to keep the cash in the house."

"Exactly! those are the three points which must be covered."

"How to arrange the matter is something of a problem," the old gentleman observed, thoughtfully.

"With the assistance of Mr. Phenix I think it can be done," the disguised spy replied.

"Suppose we arrange the matter in this way," the Westerner continued.

"As Mr. Phenix is a past-master in the art of assuming all sorts of disguises it will be an easy matter for him to take the part of a well-to-do countryman, a Westerner, an old acquaintance of yours, a man with whom, in years gone by, you did considerable business."

"Yes, yes, I see."

"He has come to New York, and by a lucky turn in stocks, which he engineered from his Western home, come in possession of a big sum of money—say five thousand dollars, and being a stranger in the city he is really at a loss to know what to do with the money until he can find an opportunity to invest it in some paying speculation."

"Ah, yes, I comprehend the scheme, and it is a capital one!" the millionaire declared.

"While speculating what to do with the money he thinks of me and comes with the request that I will do him the favor of putting it in my safe until he can get a chance to use it."

"That is the game!" Freemont exclaimed.

"He will come to you in your office in the presence of Mr. Huntington, Miss Holbrooke, and the office boy, and when he consults you in your private room he will neglectfully leave the door open and speak in the loud and careless way common to a boisterous Westerner, so that what he says can be readily overheard by those in the outer office," the disguised spy continued.

"Yes, it is a well-arranged plan, and there ought not to be any difficulty in carrying it out."

"I will have the matter arranged so that the supposed countryman will state that he received the money just as the banks closed, so he will have a good reason for coming to you, and he will arrive late in the afternoon," Freemont observed. "Then, during the dinner, you must speak about the affair so the servants will hear your words and be aware that the five thousand dollars is in your safe in the library."

"You see, Mr. Lenbold, that while I feel perfectly satisfied that the rascals have a spy in the house, yet I am not certain in regard to the party," the disguised detective continued.

"Ah, yes, I see; and you wish to arrange the affair so that the fact that the money is in the house cannot fail to come to the knowledge of the right party."

"Yes; that is the idea."

Then there was silence for a few moments.

The millionaire sat with his eyes fixed on the ground, deep in meditation.

The spy watched the old gentleman closely, rather surprised by his abstraction.

Finally Mr. Lenbold raised his head and remarked.

"Mr. Freemont, I have been thinking in regard to the slate manifestations and I cannot bring myself to believe that Miss Holbrooke can be guilty of playing any such contemptible trick upon me as you suppose."

"Of course there is no doubt that the slate manifestation could be worked in the way that you described, but I feel quite certain that she would not do anything of the kind."

"Possibly not; I may have jumped too hastily to a conclusion," the disguised spy observed.

The detective did not think that it was worth while to argue in regard to this point, for he understood that the once great railroad king, the mighty man of brains, who had engineered so many successful deals, was in the condition of many another smart man who had got the spiritualism craze.

Arguments were wasted upon him, for when a man has got a mental disease of this kind firmly fastened upon him, it is almost impossible to effect a cure by any ordinary means.

"I feel certain that you have, for certain things which have been revealed to me through this medium, could not possibly have been known to the young lady."

"Of course a trickster could produce the effects by means of this 'spy,' as you term it, but I feel quite sure that Miss Holbrooke wouldn't do anything of the kind."

"I have entirely too much faith in her to believe that she would willfully do anything wrong."

"I may be wrong in my surmise. I am only mortal, and not proof against error," the Westerner remarked.

He had his own opinion in regard to the matter; but he saw that it was useless to advance it at present.

Freemont then remarked that he would seek the veteran detective, and post him in regard to the part which he was to play, and this brought the interview to an end.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### A CUNNING LITTLE GAME.

SINCE Mr. Lenbold got the idea that it would be a good plan to get Miss Holbrooke and the young lawyer to unite in wedlock, relying on the offer of ten thousand dollars to overcome any objections that either one might have, he had been impatient to ascertain how the offer would be received.

He had little doubt though that the pair would be glad to make the arrangement.

During his business life he had come across so many people who were quite willing to do almost anything for money, that he fancied so great a sum as ten thousand dollars would be an irresistible temptation.

So, after the disguised spy took his departure the millionaire sought Miss Holbrooke.

The young woman was in the drawing-room engaged in reading.

Lenbold was noted for his directness in business affairs, so plunged at once into the matter at hand.

"You have been with me some time, Miss Holbrooke," he said, "and I have come to take a great interest in your welfare."

"I am very grateful indeed, Mr. Lenbold, for the kindness with which you have always treated me," the young lady replied, apparently much affected by the old gentleman's words.

"You are certainly very kind indeed, Mr. Lenbold," the young lady declared.

"I am a close observer, Miss Holbrooke, and it seems to me that you and Mr. Huntington have a great regard for each other."

The young woman plainly showed her surprise at this announcement, which was entirely unexpected.

Under the circumstances it was the proper thing for her to appear confused and embarrassed; so she cast her eyes upon the ground and murmured:

"Oh, Mr. Lenbold!"

"It is very natural for young people situated as you and Mr. Huntington are to take a fancy to each other and I do not wonder at it."

"In fact, if either one of you had consulted me on the subject, I should have immediately said that I thought it was a capital idea," the old gentleman continued.

"Well, I will not attempt to conceal from

you, Mr. Lenbold, that I do think a great deal of Mr. Huntington," the young woman confessed; but I am not at all sure the gentleman cares for me."

"Of course I cannot be positive about a matter of this kind, but it is my impression he thinks a great deal of you," the old financier averred, in a diplomatic way; "and it is my impression, from what I know of him, that he would make a very excellent husband for you."

"Oh, yes, sir; I do not think there is a doubt about that, but I am afraid, sir, that the gentleman does not really care for me," the girl remarked, plainly evincing by her manner that she was deeply interested.

"Well, now, my dear Miss Holbrooke, it is my impression that the gentleman is much more interested in the matter than you imagine, and if you do not mind my interfering in the affair, I will speedily ascertain just how the case stands."

"I would be very deeply obliged to you, sir, if you would take the trouble!" Miss Holbrooke declared.

"No trouble at all, I assure you!" the millionaire declared.

"The fact is, you see, I take a fatherly interest in both of you, and would be glad to do all in my power to further your happiness," and the old gentleman endeavored to beam with a benevolent and fatherly air upon the young woman.

The attempt was not a particularly successful one, for the "dried up" millionaire had by far a too foxy appearance to assume such a role.

"You are very kind, indeed!" the girl declared, gratefully. "And I fear I will never be able to thank you sufficiently for the interest that you have manifested in me."

"That is all right, my dear Miss Holbrooke, don't mention it!" the old gentleman replied, with a lordly, patronizing air.

"It is my opinion that the match would be an extremely good one, and I feel inclined to do all I can to help the matter forward."

"As I stated, I take a great interest in both of you, and as a proof—for words without deeds do not amount to anything—I have made up my mind that if you two make a match I will give yourself and husband ten thousand dollars for a wedding-present."

The girl was amazed, for she had been long enough in the employ of the old gentleman to fully understand how close he was in money matters, and so this liberal offer was a genuine surprise.

"Really, sir, you almost take my breath away!" Miss Holbrooke declared.

"I am very much in earnest in this matter, I assure you," the millionaire responded.

"I feel deeply indebted to you for your kindness, but I am sadly afraid that I never will be able to repay it."

"That is all right, my dear Miss Holbrooke; do not allow that to trouble you, I beg!" the millionaire responded, again assuming the benevolent air of the tender-hearted philanthropist.

"It really gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to forward the happiness of two such deserving people as yourself and Mr. Huntington," the old gentleman continued.

"I am very much in earnest in this matter," he added. "And I shall take an early opportunity to inform the gentleman of how I feel in regard to the affair."

"Ten thousand dollars is a great temptation," Miss Holbrooke remarked with a smile.

"Even if a lady and gentleman had only a friendly feeling for each other, the offer of such a sum as a wedding-present would be very apt to cause that feeling to ripen into love."

"Exactly! no doubt at all about that," the old gentleman declared.

"Well, I will take advantage of the first opportunity to ascertain what Mr. Huntington thinks about the matter," the millionaire added.

"I suppose that if the gentleman makes you an offer of his hand and heart you will not say nay?" he asked.

"I don't think that I would," Miss Holbrooke replied, pretending to be very much confused.

"You are a most excellent young lady,



and I do not doubt that you and Mr. Huntington will be very happy together."

And then Mr. Lenbold departed.

He went immediately in search of Mr. Huntington.

Having succeeded so well in inducing the young woman to consent to the union, he was anxious to learn the opinion of the gentleman in regard to the matter.

Inquiring of one of the servants he ascertained that the young lawyer was in the library, and so he at once sought him there.

But the foxy millionaire did not want Huntington to suspect that he took interest enough in the matter to seek him on purpose to ascertain his ideas upon the subject.

Therefore, when he entered the room he pretended to be surprised to see the gentleman.

"I thought you had gone out," he remarked.

"Well, it was my intention to go, but I became interested in a magazine article and concluded to finish it before I went."

Mr. Lenbold seated himself, took up one of the evening journals, and as he cast his eyes upon it, the heading of one of the articles suggested to him a way to broach the matter without appearing to take an undue interest in the subject.

"Another one of the 400 is going to be married, I see," the old gentleman remarked.

"And that reminds me: how comes it that a young man like yourself has not found some charming lady to wed?"

Huntington was considerably surprised by the question, and his suspicions were immediately excited.

Was it possible that the millionaire suspected that he, the secretary, had dared to fall in love with Miss Phyllis?

Although taken completely by surprise the young lawyer managed to conceal his astonishment, and replied in a careless way:

"Well, that is something that I have never troubled my head about. I suppose the reason is because I have never happened to meet the right woman yet."

"Is that possible?" the old gentleman remarked in a very friendly way.

"Now, really, do you know, I thought that it was likely that you and Miss Holbrooke would make a match."

The young lawyer was far more surprised now than he had been in the first instance, and this time he did not take any pains to conceal the feeling.

"I and Miss Holbrooke make a match!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I had an idea that such an event was not unlikely to occur, and there isn't a doubt but what she would make you an excellent wife."

"Possibly; she is certainly a very pleasant young lady," Huntington remarked, very much surprised at the interest which the old gentleman was taking in the matter.

Then Lenbold, perceiving that the young man was inclined to be lukewarm in regard to the matter, conceived that the time had come for him to bring forward the ten-thousand-dollar offer; so, after dilating for a few moments upon what a superior girl Miss Holbrooke was, he told the young lawyer how he had made up his mind to give ten thousand dollars to him and the lady if they made up their minds to wed.

Huntington was a pretty sharp fellow, and he knew the old millionaire well enough to understand that he would never make an offer of this kind without some strong motive.

"What can it be?" was the thought which came immediately into his mind.

"Can it be possible that he suspects that Phyllis and I love each other, and is this an attempt on his part to bribe me to give her up?"

The young lawyer was a little indignant, too, that the old gentleman should make the mistake of thinking he could buy him so cheaply.

He managed to conceal his feelings, though, and smilingly shook his head, saying:

"Ten thousand dollars no doubt would be a great temptation to some men, but although Miss Holbrooke is a very nice young woman indeed, yet she is not at all my style, and I wouldn't marry her if I could gain a hundred thousand dollars by so doing."

The old gentleman was astounded by this blunt and entirely unexpected speech.

"Really, I am surprised to hear you say that!" the millionaire declared.

"My dear Mr. Lenbold, money isn't everything in this world, and as far as I am concerned, I cannot imagine a fate more dreadful than to be bound for life to a woman whom it was not possible for me to love."

The millionaire was very much annoyed, but as he was an able master of the art of dissimulation, he managed to conceal it.

He did not think it wise to allow the young lawyer to perceive that he took any particular interest in the matter.

"Oh, I have made a mistake then, clearly," he remarked.

"Yes, that is true. I have a high respect for the young lady, but I never could fall in love with her."

"Well, there is no harm done. I do not suppose that I have much talent in the match-making line, although I have in contemplation a union for my daughter which I think will be highly advantageous to her."

"I am glad to hear that," the secretary declared, thinking he was fully justified in stooping to evasion, for by this time he felt pretty certain that the millionaire suspected that there was a love affair between himself and Phyllis.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE LOVERS.

"Yes, I think the match will be an excellent one," Mr. Lenbold remarked, stroking his beard in a thoughtful way.

"It is about time that my daughter was settled in life," he continued.

"A girl situated as she is—the supposed heiress of a large amount of money—is always exposed to the danger of falling a victim of some fortune-hunter, who is attracted solely by the fact that the young woman stands a chance of inheriting wealth."

"My Phyllis is a very sensible girl though, and has never given me any trouble, for she has always seemed to be able to avoid any fellows of the kind."

"I made up my mind, however, a number of years ago, before she was able to make her *debut* in society, and before I could tell just what sort of a young lady she was going to turn out to be, that if she ever showed any disposition to refuse to listen to my advice, and I thought there was danger she was going to become the prey of a fortune-hunter, I would arrange my affairs so that neither she nor her husband would have any of my wealth."

"Ah, yes, I see," responded Huntington with a placid smile.

By this time he had become satisfied that his thought was correct in regard to the millionaire suspecting there was a love affair between Phyllis and himself.

And so Huntington was fully on his guard, determined not to allow the old gentleman to perceive that he took any interest in the matter.

"I would not want my girl to starve even if she did make a fool of herself by disobeying my wishes, and if she was unwise enough to marry a man of whom I did not approve, I would arrange the matter so that while there would never be any danger of starving, yet neither she nor her husband, nor her children, would inherit my money."

"Of course the matter could be easily arranged," the young lawyer remarked with an indifferent air, just as though he did not take the slightest interest in the matter.

And really, to do Huntington justice, it was Phyllis herself who attracted him and not her money.

He would have loved the girl just the same if her father had not a dollar in the world.

So the declaration which the old millionaire made did not produce the slightest effect upon him.

"I presume, Mr. Huntington, that you think I am justified in acting in this way?" Mr. Lenbold observed.

"Well, really, I have never reflected upon the matter, but it is a subject, of course, which each man must settle for himself."

"Yes, that is correct," the old gentleman remarked.

And just at this moment the conversation

was interrupted by the appearance of a servant, who announced that one of Mr. Lenbold's old-time business associates desired to speak with him.

After the millionaire's departure the young lawyer reflected upon his words for a few moments.

"He suspects that there is a love affair between Phyllis and myself; there is not a doubt in regard to the matter," the secretary mused.

"And now the question comes up—how shall we act in this emergency?"

It was a difficult problem, and after debating the matter over in his mind for a few moments, Huntington came to the conclusion that he had better consult Phyllis upon the subject.

Just as he came to this conclusion, and rose with the idea of seeking her, the girl entered the room in search of a book.

The young man immediately explained what had occurred.

Phyllis at once became indignant.

"Why, the ideal!" she exclaimed. "Offer you ten thousand dollars as a bribe to marry that woman—I will not call her a girl, for she isn't a girl, although she does make herself up to appear quite young; but if the truth was known, I should not be at all surprised to discover that she is old enough to be my mother!"

"She is no chicken, although, as you say, she does her best to appear young."

"I do not trust her at all, though she really put herself out to be nice and agreeable to me, but I am sure she is a deceitful hussy!" Phyllis declared.

"Well, I haven't got a good opinion of her, although I really cannot give any reason why I should dislike the woman, but I certainly do."

"I should not be at all surprised if it was she who suggested to papa that there was a prospect of our getting married."

"Yes, it is possible that she was the one who put the idea into his head," the young man observed, in a reflective way.

"She could very easily do it, you know, without really saying anything outright."

"Oh, yes, a sly hint or two—a careless observation would be sufficient to arouse your father's suspicions."

"And it is just exactly what she has done!" the girl declared.

"Of course, I hope you believe, Phyllis, that it is not your father's wealth which attracts me?" Huntington remarked, earnestly.

"Oh, yes, I have a good opinion enough of myself to believe that it is the woman you seek and not the money which there is a strong probability that she will one day inherit," Phyllis replied, with a smile.

"I am glad that you have faith in me, and I assure you, Phyllis, that I would be willing to marry you to-morrow, if you consent, and the fact that by so doing you would forfeit all chance of inheriting any of your father's wealth, would not have the least influence upon me!"

The girl thanked her lover with a charming smile, and then she said:

"Oh, I am quite satisfied in regard to that, but I do not think that it is wise to incur papa's anger by taking such a desperate step."

"You said that you were willing to wait for me," she continued.

"Oh, yes, I am!" the young man responded, immediately.

"Of course, I am anxious to get you as soon as possible," he added. "But I am willing to wait until you are ready."

"I don't know what has got into papa during this last year," the girl observed, reflectively.

"He never used to act as oddly as he does now. Of course he is getting old, and as he has had a great strain on his mind for years, it may be possible that his head is not quite right."

"I feel sure that you are correct in regard to that," the young lawyer responded.

"If there was not a weak spot in his brain somewhere, he never would have become interested in this spiritualism," Huntington continued.

"In the old days when he was in his prime, one of the great railway kings of America, I am quite sure he would not have bestowed a thought upon the matter."

"And it is this artful Miss Holbrooke who



is responsible for papa becoming interested in spiritualism."

"Yes, that is true."

"Well, now then we must arrange how we must behave," the girl remarked, thoughtfully.

"Your father announces that he has a husband in view for you."

"Perhaps he has, but this is the first time that I have ever heard anything about it."

"But it does not matter whether he has one or not, for it doesn't make the slightest difference to me."

"One thing is certain I can't be married without my consent being asked, and you can be sure that I will never say yes, until I stand before the altar by your side!"

And Phyllis smiled in such a bewitching way at her lover as she spoke that he could not resist the temptation of taking her in his arms and kissing her.

She submitted to the caress willingly enough; but after a moment coyly released herself.

"There, do be careful!" she exclaimed. "If papa should happen to come in and find me in your arms, then the cat would be out of the bag with a vengeance."

"Oh, yes, no doubt about that."

"We must keep our wits about us and be very careful how we behave."

"Of course, if papa should ask me directly what I thought of you I should certainly tell him the truth, but just as long as he does not ask I shall not volunteer any information."

"That is the correct way to act, I think," the young man observed.

Then after a few more words of no particular importance the girl departed.

The lovers had perfect faith in each other, and so were not worried by the conduct of the old millionaire.

"Love laughs at locksmiths," and has but little respect for parents.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE BAIT ATTRACTS.

THE disguised detective, who was masquerading as the Western ranch-owner, did not lose any time in carrying out the scheme which he had arranged with the old millionaire.

About three o'clock on the afternoon of the day which succeeded the one when the plan had been arranged, Joe Phenix made his appearance in the office of the millionaire carefully disguised.

He was "got up" as a well-to-do, middle-aged Westerner, and being such a master at this sort of thing he had no difficulty in both looking and acting the character to the life.

He began his interview with the millionaire by remarking:

"I s'pose it is so long since you have seen me, Mr. Lenbold, that I have slipped clean out of your memory, but I am your old friend, Silas Brown, of Deer Lodge, Kansas, and as I have got a good little bit of money with me that I am anxious to put away somewhere I have made bold to hunt you up."

The millionaire immediately comprehended that this was the renowned detective, Joe Phenix, and he was much amazed by the completeness of his disguise.

The old gentleman prided himself upon being a man of rare discernment, but though he had had a long conversation with the veteran man-hunter, and therefore ought to have been perfectly familiar with his appearance, yet so complete was the disguise which Joe Phenix had assumed that the millionaire could not detect in his appearance the slightest resemblance to any one whom he had ever seen before.

But as he was prepared for the visit, he greeted the Westerner heartily, declared that he perfectly remembered him, and was extremely glad that he had called.

And in regard to the money, he would be delighted to accommodate him.

The supposed Westerner then explained how it was that he happened to have the cash, and as he intended to invest it in some good speculation as soon as he succeeded in finding one, he wanted to have the money so he could get at it at a moment's notice.

"Yes, yes, I understand," the millionaire replied.

Then the disguised detective counted out

the money, and the old gentleman said he would place it in his safe at once.

He invited the stranger to dinner, but the Westerner explained that he was obliged to decline on account of a prior engagement, remarking, though, that he would be happy to come at some other time; then he took his departure.

The interview took place in Mr. Lenbold's private office, but, as the door was not tightly closed, every word of the conversation came distinctly to the ears of Mr. Huntington and Miss Holbrooke, who were in the outer room.

The young lawyer did not pay any attention to the conversation, for he was not at all interested in the matter, and the young woman was apparently busy with her work, but if a close observer had been present, and kept a careful watch upon her face, he would soon have detected that she was listening with intent eagerness.

Peculiar indeed was the gleam which came into her eyes when to her ears came the sound of the rustling of the crisp bank-notes as the Westerner counted the five thousand dollars.

But after the transaction was completed, and the millionaire with his visitor passed through the outer office, the girl never looked up from her work.

Mr. Lenbold told the Westerner that he would put the money in his house safe, as he made a rule of never placing any valuables in the safe in the office, it being for documents only.

So, after accompanying "Mr. Silas Brown, of Deer Lodge" to the door, the millionaire proceeded to put the money away.

As it happened, on this particular day there was not much office business to be transacted and it was all finished before lunch.

After lunch was over, Mr. Lenbold went out to keep a business appointment, and Phyllis, accompanied by Mr. Huntington, took the carriage for a drive in the Park.

Mr. St. Germaine had complained of a headache during the meal, and announced his intention of lying down for awhile.

After leaving the table, he had gone upstairs, but in a brief half-hour—just allowing sufficient time for the others to depart—he came down to the drawing-room, where he found Miss Holbrooke.

"Is the door tightly closed?" she asked after the Englishman entered.

"Oh, yes, I always take care to have the door closed when I am going to talk business," St. Germaine replied.

"You guessed then that I have something important to say?"

"Certainly! When you gave me the 'office' at the table that you wanted to talk to me, I comprehended at once that you weren't anxious to merely inquire after my health."

"You are correct. If I hadn't something important to say, I wouldn't have given you the signal that I desired to speak to you."

"Well, what is it?" the Englishman asked, as he took a seat on the opposite side of the window from where the young woman sat.

They were so near the window that they could easily gaze out of it, and if any one had happened to come into the room they would never have suspected from the positions of the pair that they were engaged in an important private conversation.

"In the first place, Mr. Lenbold has set his heart on making a match between Mr. Huntington and myself, and generously offers to make us a wedding-present of ten thousand dollars."

"He is afraid that Huntington and his daughter may make a match, and he is anxious to stop it."

"Yes, that is his idea, I presume."

"It will not work!" the Englishman exclaimed, with a decided shake of the head.

"You think that the man will be proof against the temptation of the ten thousand?"

"Oh, yes, he is not the sort of chap to be bought as cheaply as that. Besides, I am well satisfied in my own mind that there is a love affair between the two, although they are taking great care to keep it quiet."

"I suspected as much, but although I have watched them closely, I have never been able to really detect anything to make me feel certain that my suspicion was correct."

"It is their game not to allow the fact to be known, for the old man would undoubtedly cut up rusty if he found it out."

"I thought that you wouldn't mind if I tried to get the ten thousand," the girl remarked, speaking as if she felt a little doubtful about the matter.

"No, certainly not! Go in and collar all the wealth you can. I wouldn't put a straw in your way!"

"But you will not make the trick this time unless I am all out in my calculation."

"Well, I will admit that I have never had much hope of succeeding, but I thought it was worth trying for."

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly."

"But here is something which I think you can turn to advantage."

And then Miss Holbrooke told the story of the Westerner's visit.

"Oho! five thousand dollars in nice new 'flimseys,' eh?" St. Germaine exclaimed, rubbing his hands, gleefully, together.

"Yes."

"And in the safe in the library?"

"Exactly!"

"I don't see anything to prevent a couple of good cracksmen from getting at those flimseys!" the Englishman declared, with a grin.

"Well, it doesn't seem to me as if the job would be a very difficult one."

"Oh, no, nothing particularly difficult about it."

"One of those small, ornamental ones," the girl replied.

"It stands in the corner with an embroidered cloth over it."

"Ah, yes, I noticed it, but I didn't have an idea that it was a safe."

"Yes, it is."

"Probably a good pattern, for a man like Lenbold wouldn't be apt to have any cheap affair."

"He has had it some time, twelve or fifteen years. I got that out of the butler, for I had an idea the information might come in handy some time."

"You are a jewel of a woman, and no mistake!" the Englishman cried in accents of admiration.

"I always try to have my wits about me," the woman replied, smiling with pleasure at the compliment.

"If he has had it that length of time it is certain that it does not possess the improvements which have come up in the last six or eight years," St. Germaine remarked in a reflective way.

"No, it is an old pattern undoubtedly."

"It will be easy to drill a hole in by the side of the lock and get at the combination in that way."

"We can't come the gunpowder act in a private house as if it was a deserted bank."

"Oh, no, for the noise of the explosion would be certain to wake the sleepers."

"The drill will do the business without making any noise to disturb the house."

"Yes, that is true."

"I had an idea that there might be something in the house to make it worth our while to crack the crib, and so I am well-posted in regard to the locks on the various doors."

"It will be an easy matter, with you upon the inside, though, to admit whoever you like," the girl suggested.

"Oh, yes!"

And then the Englishman meditated for a few moments.

"I think that this is one of the kind of jobs which had better be attended to as soon as possible," he remarked.

"Yes, that seems to me to be correct, for the owner may take the money away at any moment."

"Undoubtedly! And so the quicker we make the trick the better."

"I certainly think so."

"Oh, there isn't any doubt about it!" St. Germaine exclaimed.

"I will go out and make the arrangements for this very night."

"When there are five thousand good, solid 'cases' waiting to be picked up, it is a shame not to pluck the plum as soon as possible!"

"That is true enough."

"By the way, what do you think of this Freemont?" the Englishman asked, abruptly.

"I do not like him!"



"Neither do I, and, some way, I have got an idea that he may turn out to be dangerous."

"I should not be surprised, for though he seems to be careless and indifferent to what is going on around him, yet I am satisfied that very little escapes his eyes."

"Yes, I agree with you that he is an uncommon sharp fellow," St. Germaine observed.

"I did not think so in the beginning, and I made the mistake of imagining that he was a pigeon who could be plucked without much difficulty."

"And did you try it?"

"Yes, and the attempt resulted in a complete failure."

"He was proof against all attempts to get him into a game, and when, as a last effort, I arranged a little sand-bagging scheme, he not only managed to escape but thrashed the man who tried to do the job within an inch of his life."

"Well, I am surprised, for he does not appear as if he could distinguish himself in that way."

"The man that he hammered declares that he must be a regular prize-fighter, for no fellow who was not at the top of the heap in such a game could have got away with him so easily."

"It is very strange."

"We must keep our eyes on him, for I am sure he will bear watching."

"And now I will be off to arrange for the cracking of the crib," St. Germaine said in conclusion, and this ended the interview.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### "CRACKING" THE SAFE.

ON the night of the day on which occurred the events detailed in our last chapter, it was close to twelve o'clock before the inmates of the Lenbold mansion retired to rest.

Mr. Lenbold, with his daughter, had been to the opera, and as they stopped to have some refreshments, they did not get to the house until nearly midnight.

Huntington had been to his club and got in at about the same time.

The servants had a little jollification in the kitchen, and they did not get to bed until fully half-past twelve.

Thanks to Miss Holbrooke, the Englishman had been posted in regard to the servants' movements, and, with his door just ajar, so he would be able to hear the domestics when they went up-stairs, he kept watch.

"Let me see," he mused, after the servants had gone to their apartments.

"Allowing half an hour for them to get comfortably asleep will bring it up to one o'clock; then another hour for them to get good and sound in the arms of Morpheus, and we have two, and so it appears that the calculation which I made in advance that two o'clock would be about the proper time to crack the crib is singularly correct."

"There is a good hour and a half for me to wait, and I may as well prepare to pass the time as comfortably as possible."

In anticipation of such a thing, St. Germaine had provided himself with half a dozen good cigars and a couple of novels, translations from the French, which he thought would likely be interesting to a man like himself.

And so he sat, smoked his cigars, and tried to believe that the book was vastly entertaining, as the minutes slowly melted away.

A dozen times he looked at his watch impatiently.

Never before had the steps of old Father Time seemed to be so slow.

The god of time was surely shod with lead to creep on at such a snail's pace.

At last, though, the hands of the watch showed that it was five minutes of two.

St. Germaine arose and opened the door of his room.

He listened intently for a few moments.

Not a sound could he hear.

All within the mansion were apparently buried in slumber.

The Englishman had a pair of rubber overshoes which he put on, and then he stole forth.

Thanks to this precaution he was able to move with noiseless tread.

The light in the lower hall was always

kept burning during the night, and so the Englishman was not obliged to grope his way in the dark.

He descended to the basement door.

As the key was in the lock, it was an easy matter for him to open the door after drawing the stout bolts which guarded it.

The entrance to the basement was guarded on the outside by an iron gate.

This was locked, of course, but as the key was always hung on a nail in the lower entry by the side of the basement door when the house was closed for the night, it was no trouble for this stealthy prowler to open the gate.

It was with the utmost caution that he turned the key in the lock. Two dark figures came out of the gloom of the night and advanced with noiseless tread to the basement door of the millionaire's mansion.

The pair were old acquaintances of the reader, being the veteran crook, Homer Blodget, and his pal, Herman Van Troll, "the Professor."

"You are right on time, boys," St. Germaine remarked.

"Oh, yes, we go by clock-work," Blodget replied with a grin.

Both of the men were neatly clad, and there wasn't anything out of the way about their appearance, so that even the sharpest-eyed and most suspicious policeman encountering the pair would not be apt to think that they were abroad on an unlawful errand.

"Did you run across any cop in the neighborhood?" St. Germaine asked as the two passed through the iron gate.

"Not even a smell of one!" the Professor replied.

"That is good, although your get-up is so excellent that even if you had met a copper the chances are a thousand to one that he wouldn't have taken a second glance at you."

"Oh, yes; we're a couple of bloods on our way home from the club," Blodget observed, with another grin.

Then the three went directly to the library, the Englishman leading the way.

When they were within the room, St. Germaine lit the gas, taking the precaution to put his folded handkerchief over the keyhole, so that no ray of light could stream into the entry.

"It isn't likely that any one will pass through the hall while we are cracking the safe, but I always take all possible precautions so as to be on the safe side."

The others thought this was wise, and said so.

Both Blodget and the Professor were old hands at this sort of business, and went to work with the skill which came from long experience.

Their "trick" of drilling through the safe, so as to displace the "spindle," was a cunning one, and in less than an hour's time the job was done; the safe, with its treasures, was at the mercy of this trio of daring and experienced cracksmen.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE TRAP IS SPRUNG.

IT did not take these skillful rascals long to ascertain just what the safe contained.

The five thousand dollars, in good, crispy National Bank notes, were soon in the hands of the Englishman, but, to the disappointment of the three, they soon satisfied themselves that the money was all that would be of any use to them.

There were some railroad bonds and other securities in the safe, but after a careful examination the three came to the conclusion that it would not be wise for them to take them.

"We would have a deuce of a time getting rid of the stuff," St. Germaine assured.

"Oh, yes, and we would stand a good chance of getting the collar during the operation," Blodget supplemented.

"I am not anxious to tackle the job of getting away with any railroad bonds," the Professor declared. "If it was diamonds, now, or jewelry, or even silver plate, there would be some sense in our lugging it off, but these bits of paper are mighty apt to get a man into trouble."

"You are right, and it is my opinion that we had best let them stay just where they are," the Englishman decided.

The others agreed to this.

"Now, then, we will divide the spoils," St. Germaine announced, "for we might just as well make the division now as to wait until another time."

"Correct!" Blodget acquiesced; "the quicker business of this kind is settled the better."

"My sentiments to a hair!" the professor assented.

"Well, I think that a fair division would be two thousand for me, and fifteen hundred apiece for you," St. Germaine remarked.

"That's right!" Blodget answered. "You put up the job—engineered the whole thing, in fact, and it is only right you should take the lion's share."

"I'm agreeable, and I am perfectly satisfied to take fifteen hundred dollars for my share," the professor announced, "for, as Blodget says: you gave us the chance to do the trick, and if you hadn't fixed the thing we wouldn't have got a smell!"

The money was all in crisp one-hundred-dollar bills, evidently fresh from a bank; so it did not take the Englishman long to make the division, and with a deal of satisfaction the three midnight marauders pocketed the money.

"This is the first we have succeeded in getting out of this house, but it will not be the last, unless I am greatly mistaken," St. Germaine averred.

"This old bloke of a millionaire has got a gal, I believe," Blodget remarked.

"Yes, he has," the Englishman replied.

"How is she off for sparklers and jewelry?" the veteran crook questioned. "She ought to be well fixed. Couldn't you arrange it so that we could get a chance at them?"

"Ah, yes; that would be another nice job!" the professor urged. "Is there any chance for us to get at them to-night?"

"No; nothing can be done to-night," the Englishman answered.

"She has some good diamonds, I believe. I am not certain about the matter, because I have not been in the house long enough to get a sight at them, but I understand the sparklers are worth about ten thousand dollars."

"Oho! that would be a nice little boodle for us to collar!" Blodget declared.

"And diamonds can be turned into cash better than anything else in the jewelry line," the professor observed.

"The thieves of 'fences' are never willing to give over a quarter of what a thing is worth, usually, but when it comes to diamonds, if a man knows where to go, and how to play his points, he is pretty safe to collar a half."

"That is correct," the Englishman observed. "And if the girl's sparklers are worth ten thousand dollars, we can surely get from four to five thousand for them."

"Why, this will be a regular picnic!" Blodget exclaimed.

"Oh, yes!" the professor assented. "I say, old man, this idea of yours of leaving the West and coming to New York is about as good a one as you ever had, I reckon!"

"It has panned out well so far, but this is only the beginning," the Englishman replied.

"But now, boys, it is time you are off," he continued.

"You cannot make any more money here to-night. So far, we have worked the job to the queen's taste, and now there is only one more risk for you—and that is to get out of the house without attracting observation."

"It would be ugly for us if we happened to run plump into the arms of a cop when we sneak through the basement door," Blodget remarked, with a reflective air.

"If you take pains to listen, before you attempt to reach the street, it is not likely you will make a bad break of that kind," St. Germaine observed.

"If any cop saw us come out of the house, he would be mighty certain to suspect that we had been up to some game, unless he was the dumbest kind of a donkey," the professor remarked.

"Oh, yes," the Englishman assented.

"But there is only a moment of danger—when you pass from the house to the street," he continued.

"If you can succeed in getting into the street without being seen by a policeman,



then the chances are a thousand to one that you will get away all right.

"But even supposing that you are unlucky enough to encounter an officer just as you come out of the house, and he is sufficiently imprudent to attempt to detain you; why, a well-directed clip on the head will lay the fellow out, and give you an opportunity to get away."

"Oh, yes, and you can bet your sweet life that neither the professor nor myself would hesitate a moment in letting any cop have one for his nob!" Blodget declared.

"That is where you are sensible!" the Englishman asserted.

"But be off with you, boys, and be sure to listen for footsteps before you venture out into the street."

"Don't you worry about that," Blodget replied. "The professor has ears like a fox, and unless there is a cop, taking it easy on a doorstep, right in the neighborhood, we will be certain to get away."

"You can find your way out all right without me?" St. Germaine questioned.

"Oh, yes; there isn't any use of your coming, for if we should be unlucky enough to be nabbed there is no sense in dragging you into the scrape," Blodget answered.

"That is right!" the professor declared. "It would be far better for us to have you at liberty, so you could do your level best to get us out of the scrape, than to have you locked up with us."

"That is the correct view to take of the matter," the Englishman remarked.

"But I don't think there is any danger of your getting nabbed if you use common caution."

"You can bet all you are worth that we will use uncommon caution!" Blodget declared with a grin.

"Just close the basement door and the gate," St. Germaine advised.

"I took the key out of the gate lock and hung it up on its nail in the hall, so when the fly-cops come to make an examination in the morning they will come to the conclusion that the servants neglected to bolt the basement door, and the parties who got away with the boodle got in by picking the locks."

"We don't want it to look, pards, you understand, as if it was an 'inside job,'" St. Germaine continued.

"It is our game to pull the wool over their eyes, and matters must be arranged so it will not appear as if the parties who cracked the safe and got away with the valuables had been admitted into the house by one of the inmates."

"We understand, and we will fix the doors all right," Blodget replied.

"There is no doubt that there will be a fearful row kicked up about this little job, for old Lenbold is just the man to raise Cain in a case of this kind," the Englishman remarked.

"But if you are not nabbed upon leaving the house, the chances are about a million to one that you will not be caught if you act with common prudence."

Then he turned out the gas, but as Blodget opened the door a most unwelcome sight appeared to the eyes of the cracksmen.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### "NABBED."

THREE stalwart policemen, headed by Detective Pat O'Callahan, in plain clothes, were in the hall, and as the door opened they menaced the cracksmen with leveled revolvers.

The crooks were aghast.

The surprise was complete, for never were men more amazed.

A moment they stared at the officers, and then each crook, involuntarily, made a movement as if to draw a weapon.

"Come, come! none of that!" cried the keen-eyed detective sharply.

"Don't attempt to try any game of that kind, unless you are anxious to be sent to the other world by the Lightning Express train!"

A moment the three cracksmen glared at the speaker, and then, realizing that it would be utter folly for them to attempt to resist, they allowed their hands to fall by their sides.

"That is right, boys," the detective commented.

"Now you are acting sensibly," he continued. "It isn't of any use for a man to kick against fate, you know. When you get into a tight place of this kind, the only thing to do is to grin and bear it."

"Jimmy, snap the bracelets on!"

This command was addressed to one of the policemen, who immediately put his revolver away, and produced three pair of handcuffs.

The crooks looked at each other as three pair of "bracelets" made their appearance.

The same thought had occurred simultaneously to all of the cracksmen.

It was not through the chance of accident that the police had contrived to surprise them in this astounding manner.

Usually a detective carries a single pair of handcuffs with him, but from the fact that this common policeman was provided with three pair, it was proof positive to their minds that they had fallen into a trap.

Too late to be of any service came the suspicion that the five thousand dollars had been a bait designed to lure them into a snare.

It was as much as the veteran crooks could do to keep from groaning aloud when the handcuffs were snapped upon their wrists, and they reflected how blindly, and with what blundering footsteps, they had walked into the trap.

All three of the men were renowned as "special pleaders," and if they conceived that there was one chance out of a hundred of their being able to set up a claim of innocence, they most surely would have tried to persuade the officers that there was some mistake about the matter.

But they were taken red-handed!

The "cracked" safe—the burglars' tools in their possession, with which the job had been performed, and, worst of all, the crisp banknotes which had caused them to chuckle so gleefully when they had taken them from the safe.

It was not possible for them to explain away the possession of the money.

As soon as the ceremony of putting on the handcuffs was over, Detective O'Callahan called out:

"The prisoners are secured!"

Then Mr. Lenbold made his appearance, accompanied by the veteran detective, Joe Phenix.

Again the cracksmen felt strongly tempted to groan aloud, for the coming of the millionaire, accompanied by a man who possessed such a judicial air as the experienced thief-taker, was convincing proof that they were the victims of a skillfully devised plot.

"I am astounded, Mr. St. Germaine, to find you in such a situation as this!" the old millionaire declared.

The Englishman assumed a careless air, although rage was tearing at his heart.

"Well, I certainly cannot deny that appearances at present are somewhat against me, but when my examination takes place before a magistrate, I am quite sure I will be able to explain matters satisfactorily to him," he observed.

"That is right, keep a stiff upper lip!" Detective O'Callahan exclaimed.

"And now, gentlemen, I hope you will excuse me if I take the liberty of 'going through' you?" the officer continued, with mock politeness.

"Well, as we cannot help ourselves, we will be obliged to submit, of course," the Englishman remarked, with the air of a philosopher.

The search resulted in the production of the stolen bank-bills, a full set of burglars' tools, the peculiar instruments with which the safe had been cracked, and the weapons carried by the crooks.

"Can you identify this money, Mr. Lenbold?" Detective O'Callahan asked.

"Oh, yes, I have the number of each note," the millionaire replied.

"I also have a list," Joe Phenix said. "So there will not be any trouble in proving that these bills were the ones which were in the safe."

Blodget's rage at this announcement was so great that he could not restrain himself.

"It was a mighty smart trick you played!" he cried. "You laid a trap for us, but I swear I will get even with the man who put up the job!"

"And so will I, too!" exclaimed the professor, with fierce determination.

"Well, gentlemen, I fancy you will have to hold me responsible," Joe Phenix remarked, in his quiet way.

"And who may you be?" Blodget exclaimed, insolently. "I don't remember that I ever had the pleasure of being introduced to you."

"I think you are right in regard to that, for I feel quite certain that I never saw you before," the detective remarked. "Therefore I take it for granted that all three of you are strangers in the city, or otherwise I should know you."

"My name is Joe Phenix."

The crooks exchanged glances, and it was plain from the expression on their faces that the veteran detective was not unknown to them by reputation.

Leaving the prisoners in charge of the policemen, Detective O'Callahan, with Mr. Lenbold, and Joe Phenix, went into the library, lit the gas and examined the safe.

Both the veteran man-hunter and the detective from Headquarters were astonished by the skill which the crooks had displayed in "cracking" the safe.

"I say, Mr. Phenix, it is evident that these fellows are no slouches!" O'Callahan exclaimed in admiration.

"Oh, no! they are good workmen and thoroughly understand their business," Joe Phenix replied.

"The scoundrels have succeeded in ruining the safe!" the millionaire remarked, testily, always having an eye to the "main chance," a peculiarity for which he was noted.

"Yes, it will have to go to the shop and be repaired before it will be good for anything," Detective O'Callahan observed.

"It is a pity that you could not have arrested the fellows before they ruined the safe," Mr. Lenbold remarked with a regretful air.

"Well, we might have done that, of course, but we couldn't have got so strong a case against them as we have now," O'Callahan replied.

"And if an attempt had been made to enter the room, and surprise them while they were at work on the safe, we could not have taken them at such a disadvantage as we did secure, so the chances are that they would have fought desperately, and some lives might have been sacrificed," Joe Phenix remarked.

"Yes, yes, very true!" the millionaire exclaimed.

Then the officers departed with their prisoners, the old gentleman saying that he would appear in court to press the charge against the men in the morning.

The trap had securely caged the birds.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### AN INVESTIGATION.

AFTER the policemen departed with the crooks the Westerner, Freemont, made his appearance, having been watching the seance through the crack of a door, slightly ajar, at the other end of the hall.

Mr. Lenbold was surprised to see him, for he had no idea that he was anywhere in the neighborhood.

Joe Phenix had written the millionaire that he desired to see him that evening at eight o'clock on important business.

When the detective came he explained that he thought it was probable that an attempt might be made to rob the safe that very night.

"I have an idea that by means of the spy, whom the rascals have succeeded in getting into your house, they were immediately informed that the money had been placed in the safe, and as under the circumstances of the case it is liable to be withdrawn at any time, I fancy that the rogues will try to get at it as soon as possible."

The millionaire agreed that this was probable.

Then the veteran detective explained how he wished to smuggle Detective O'Callahan and a couple of policemen into the house so as to be able to arrest the cracksmen.

The old gentleman, of course, was willing to do all in his power to assist the detective to capture the rascals.

The Westerner's name was not mentioned, therefore Mr. Lenbold presumed that he would not take any part in the proceeding.



So the old gentleman was not prepared for his appearance.

"Hello! I didn't know that you were anywhere around!" the millionaire exclaimed.

"Oh, yes; I take a decided interest in these proceedings, and as I had a hand in arranging the affair I was anxious to see how the scheme worked," Freemont remarked.

"It certainly succeeded to perfection," the old gentleman declared.

"The reason that my assistant here, who may be aptly termed my right-bower, kept out of the way, was that as there was a chance we might not succeed in nabbing the spy it was desirable that his connection with the affair should be kept secret," Joe Phenix explained.

"Yes, yes, I understand; if the secret was revealed his usefulness would be impaired," Mr. Lenbold said.

"Exactly! you have hit upon the truth," the veteran detective replied.

"We have succeeded in capturing three of the gang, but whether we have bagged all of the rascals, who are banded together, or not is a question," Joe Phenix continued.

"It is my impression that there are one or two more," the Westerner observed.

"For instance, there is the big fellow, with the black beard, who attempted to sand-bag me the other night, as I related to you," Freemont added.

"Yes, you are right; we did not get him," Joe Phenix assented.

"And there isn't any doubt in my mind that he is one of the gang," the Westerner declared.

"Undoubtedly!" the veteran detective replied. "And there may be one or two more besides him, although, as a rule, a gang of this kind rarely consists of more than three or four men."

"It is to me the most astonishing thing that this Englishman should be mixed up in an affair of this kind," the millionaire remarked.

"Well, Mr. Lenbold, I think from the investigations which I have made in regard to the man that he is no more an Englishman than I am," the man-hunter replied.

"Dear me! is that possible?" the millionaire exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, I called upon the English consul and inquired about the man," Joe Phenix explained.

"I put myself in communication with him in regard to this person, and he seemed to be satisfied that he was all right," the old gentleman averred.

"Oh, there is no doubt that there is such a man as Edmund St. Germaine, and that he is a rich young fellow, belonging to one of the best families in England, and when this fellow called upon the consul, and tendered his letters of introduction, the English representative never had a suspicion that the letters might be clever forgeries," Joe Phenix observed.

"Ah, yes, I see."

"It would be an easy matter for the rascal to arrange the game with the assistance of some English crook, who knew all about the real Edmund St. Germaine."

"It certainly would not be difficult," the millionaire assented.

"The true St. Germaine is quite a sporting character, interested in horses, and a prominent man on the turf, so it would be possible for a first-class English crook to know all about him," the man-hunter explained.

"Ah, yes, I perceive," said the old gentleman. "But what a bold game the fellow played!"

"Yes, that is a fact, but you see he counted upon the boldness of the game to carry him through," Joe Phenix replied.

"And just as soon as he succeeded in humbugging the English consul, he knew that the most difficult part of the deception was over."

"Very true, for the fellow played his part well," the millionaire observed.

"He seemed to have plenty of money, spent it lavishly, and I never had a suspicion that there was anything wrong about him until this gentleman made his revelation to me," and Mr. Lenbold nodded to the Westerner.

"We trapped him so nicely that he is certain to go up the river," Joe Phenix declared.

"And now the next thing in order is to examine his room, and baggage, and we may be able to find some evidence which will post us as to who and what the man really is," the veteran detective continued.

"Yes, that is a good idea," the millionaire assented.

"Follow me and I will take you to his room."

The man-hunter went with the old gentleman.

In the Englishman's apartment the gas was burning, and the bed-clothing was turned down, just as if some one had recently arisen.

"He only brought a single small trunk, a valise, and a hat-box with him," the millionaire explained.

"And he made a remark that when he traveled he always made it a rule to go in light marching order."

"That was a reasonable excuse," Joe Phenix observed.

"Now then, I am going to take the liberty of examining the contents of these articles," the detective continued, and as he spoke he drew a large bunch of trunk and valise keys from his pocket.

He did not deem it worth while to explain to the owner of the mansion that his "right bower," as he termed the Westerner, had taken the precaution to not only find out just what baggage the Englishman possessed, but also had with a bit of wax taken the impression of the keyholes.

Owing to this circumstance, then, it was not strange that the veteran man-hunter had but little trouble in finding keys to fit the locks of both the trunk and valise.

The detective made a careful examination of all the articles contained in the trunk and valise, but did not find anything of a suspicious nature, with the exception of a small bottle which contained a golden-hued liquid.

Joe Phenix held it up, and then he and the Westerner exchanged significant glances.

The bottle had a gaudy label, and the inscription proclaimed that it was "M. Felix's Unrivalled Golden Bath for the Hair."

"What on earth did the man want such an article as this for?" the old gentleman exclaimed, in surprise.

"Because the natural color of his hair is black," the veteran detective replied.

"And in order to disguise his personal appearance, so as to prevent recognition, he changed the color of his hair by means of this bleach."

"Well, well, this fellow is really a most complete scoundrel!" the millionaire exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, there is no discount on him!" the Westerner declared.

Then Joe Phenix, pursuing his investigations, discovered that there was a false bottom to the valise, and when this was opened, a short-haired black wig, and a beard of the same hue, with crispy curling hair, were revealed.

Again the human bloodhounds exchanged significant glances.

"Aha! these were evidently used by him when he wanted to disguise his appearance," the millionaire remarked, taking a great interest in the matter.

"Oh, yes, that was the game, no doubt," Joe Phenix remarked.

"And this discovery gives us the clue which we have been seeking," he continued.

"Is it possible?" the old gentleman inquired.

"Yes; this man's right name is William Black; he is a well-known Western desperado, and among his pals bears the name of Black Bill—Captain Black Bill."

"When he appears in his own proper person, he has black hair and a short black beard."

"As the West grew too hot to hold him, he came East, shaved off his beard and bleached his hair, then got this wig and beard so that he could meet his pals without danger of being identified as the Englishman."

"This fellow must be a really marvelous rascal!" the millionaire declared.

"Oh, yes, but he is safely trapped at last," Joe Phenix replied. "And unless he is smart enough to escape from the Tombs prison, he is certain to do the State some service in Sing Sing."

"I am very glad to hear it, for such a ras-

cal deserves to be punished," Mr. Lenbold declared.

The veteran detective then took his departure, but before he went the Westerner took advantage of a favorable opportunity to whisper in his ear:

"I will warn the Guttenburg sport tomorrow that his man is trapped and in the Tombs."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### IN DURANCE VILE.

IN the narrow confines of a cell in New York's gloomy city prison known as the Tombs, sat the false Englishman, who had called himself Edmund St. Germaine.

The first thing in the morning he had sent for the warden of the prison and asked if he could be allowed to communicate with a lawyer.

"Certainly!" the Tombs official replied.

"Will you have the kindness to send a message then to Abram Pfefferkin?" the prisoner asked. "I will pay well for the trouble."

"I will send it right away," the warden answered.

"Pfefferkin is a good lawyer and he will pull you out of this scrape if any man can."

Then the warden withdrew, somewhat surprised that the Englishman, whom he took to be a stranger, should want this one particular legal gentleman.

"Possibly Pfefferkin's fame has traveled across the water," he observed. "But I wonder at it."

Abram Pfefferkin was one of the many lawyers in the metropolis who made a specialty of criminal cases, but although among his professional brethren he bore the reputation of being an extra smart fellow, yet he was not well liked, for he had the name of being shifty, tricky and unscrupulous.

As both his appearance and voice were against him as a "jury lawyer," he rarely attempted to conduct a case himself.

He got together the law points, mapped out how the case should be tried, and then had some good talker, who could be relied upon to make a good impression upon the jury, appear for his client.

And so it happened that though the lawyers, who devoted themselves to criminal cases, and the vast army of rogues, many of whom had succeeded, thanks to his aid, in slipping through the meshes of the law, knew all about Abram Pfefferkin, the world at large regarded him only as an obscure lawyer who did not amount to much.

The ability of a man to pay well for services rendered has as much to do with his getting the aforesaid services in jail as anywhere else.

St. Germaine had plenty of money—was not inclined to be stingy with it, and so within a half an hour from the time that he expressed a desire to see the lawyer, that individual made his appearance in his cell.

Pfefferkin was a little, foxy-looking man, whose features plainly betrayed that he was one of the descendants of the Chosen People.

From his face a good judge of character would have decided that he was a peculiar compound, possessing the cunning of the fox and the snarling ferocity of the wolf.

"This is Mr. Pfefferkin?" the prisoner remarked, as the keeper introduced the lawyer into the cell.

"Yes, sir, that is my name," the lawyer replied, with a curious glance at the other.

"As the furniture of this apartment is rather limited, I will have to ask you to take a seat upon the stool, while I will sit on the bed and make believe that it is a lounge," the Englishman remarked in his easy, careless way.

The lawyer grinned, and seated himself upon the stool, while the prisoner sat on the edge of the bed.

Then the legal gentleman fell to studying the face of the other again.

"No, it is no use, you are only wasting your time!" the prisoner exclaimed, abruptly.

"I am a stranger to you, and this is our first meeting!"

"Well, it was my impression that you were not an old acquaintance."

"That is correct."

"How did you happen to send for me?"

"I knew all about you by reputation," the other replied; and then, leaning toward the



lawyer, and speaking in so low a tone that it would not have been possible for a listener standing at the cell door to overhear his words, he said:

"I am not an Englishman, but an American; I am from the West, and well acquainted with a dozen or two of good men who have been unlucky enough to get into trouble here in New York, and succeeded in getting out through your skill."

"Ah, yes," and the lawyer nodded his bushy head. "You are one of the boys, eh?"

"Yes, sir, I have been there many a time!" the other declared.

"What is the trouble now?"

"Oh, I am in such a state that salt will not save me!"

"That is bad—how is it?"

The prisoner then told the story of his capture.

Pefferkin listened intently, then, when the tale was completed, he shook his head in a grave way.

"It is bad!"

"Oh, yes, it is just as I said; I am in the worst kind of a hole!"

"That Joe Phenix is a devil!"

"Yes, you are right, and when I get out of this scrape I shall feel very strongly inclined to see if his skin is proof against the point of a knife, the cursed hound!" the prisoner cried in a ferocious tone.

Again the lawyer shook his big head.

"Well, there is no telling; you may be able to get square with him, but no one else has ever succeeded in doing so, although many desperate fellows have tried," he remarked.

The prisoner looked surprised.

"Why, is the man knife and bullet-proof?" he inquired, incredulously.

The lawyer grinned.

"Ah, well, I would not like to go so far as to declare that to be the truth," he replied.

"But I will say though that this bloodhound seems to be remarkably lucky."

"Many men have tried to get square with him and failed?" the prisoner asked.

"Yes."

"Well, if I go up the river, when I come down I will try my luck, anyhow."

"Now then, let me see," said the lawyer, reflectively. "It seems that they caught you dead to rights."

"Oh, yes, not a doubt of it!"

"What defense have you got?"

"Nary bit of a defense, as far as I can see. We were taken in the room where we cracked the safe."

"There was five thousand dollars in marked bills in the 'plant'—that is the same as marked, for the numbers of all the bills had been taken, and when we were searched after the 'darbies' were snapped on our wrists, my pals had fifteen hundred dollars apiece of the marked money, and in my pocket was two thousand dollars' worth of the 'flimsies.'"

"It is bad—very bad!" the lawyer declared.

"Oh, yes!" the prisoner exclaimed, with a grimace. "Thanks to this infernal detective, Joe Phenix, I have got myself in the worst kind of a hole."

"Of course, I understand now that there was a regular trap set for us, and if we had been the biggest chumps in the world, we couldn't have got caught more easily."

"You think that the money was put in the safe for the express purpose of getting you to crack it?" the lawyer asked, thoughtfully.

"Exactly! that was the game, and it worked splendidly, too."

"I and my pals are strangers here in New York, and we thought there would be a chance for us to take a few good tricks before the police got onto our game."

"It wasn't a bad idea."

"And I worked the trick so as to get into old Lenbold's house, and everything seemed to be going on so well that I had not the slightest suspicion that the fly cops had their eyes on us."

"It was strange that you were spotted."

"You are right, but we were, and this little trap constructed for our especial benefit, and, as I said, we got caught in it just as if we were the biggest chumps that ever tried to crack a crib."

"Well, under the circumstances, I don't really know what to advise," the lawyer remarked, thoughtfully.

"Lenbold is just the kind of man to press-

cute you to the fullest extent of the law, and the evidence is so strong and direct that it is big odds the jury will convict you without leaving their seats."

"I understand all this. I am an old hand at this sort of thing, and I can calculate the chances as well as any man living."

"But if a game cannot be worked in one way, sometimes it can be done in another, and I have thought out a scheme, which I think you can put through all right, for it is only a question of money, and I have plenty."

Then the prisoner explained his plan.

The lawyer listened attentively, made a few suggestions, and then took his departure, confident that the plan stood a chance of being successful.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### A WOMAN'S DEVOTION.

THE preliminary examination of the three crooks took place on the next morning after their arrest, and their cases were set to be tried on that day week.

Pefferkin appeared in person, and fought as hard as he could for a delay, much to the astonishment of his brother lawyers, and after the date of the trial was set, some of his acquaintances questioned him about the matter.

"What do you expect to gain by pushing off the case?" they demanded to know.

"It is as plain as the nose on your face that the men are guilty, and it is about as certain that they will be convicted as anything can be in this world."

The lawyer smiled in his foxy way, and replied:

"Well, I must do something to earn my fees, you know. I understand just as well as any of you that the men don't stand any show, and are surely booked for a trip up the river, but as long as I am retained to fight the case, I must make a pretense of doing something, no matter whether my work amounts to anything or not."

This was reasonable, and the other lawyers winked knowingly and chuckled in glee.

But the scheme which the imprisoned crook had formed required time, and this the wily lawyer had contrived to gain.

There was another service which Pefferkin performed for the false Englishman; this was to call upon Miss Holbrooke and make known to her that the prisoner in the Tombs desired to have her call upon him.

The lawyer took care to go the Lenbold mansion after the shades of night had covered in the earth, for he was afraid that some one in the neighborhood might recognize him, and it was important that his visit should be kept a secret.

When the servant came in answer to his ring he asked for Miss Holbrooke, but declined to enter, saying that he was in a hurry and only desired to speak to the lady for a moment.

As soon as Miss Holbrooke came he explained his business as briefly as possible, speaking in so low a tone that it would not be possible for any one within the hall to overhear his words.

The lady's face was dark and anxious as she listened to the message.

"Is there any hope that he can escape conviction?" she asked.

"Not the slightest!" the lawyer replied, decidedly. "The evidence is so strong and direct that he is as sure to be convicted and sent to State Prison as that we are standing here this moment."

The girl gave vent to a deep sigh.

"It is unfortunate," she said.

"Yes, nothing short of something very much like a miracle will keep him out of Sing Sing, and as he comes before the most severe judge on the bench—a man who prides himself on striking terror to the hearts of the criminal classes by the severity of his sentences, it is safe to say that he will be put away for as long as the law allows—ten years, maybe."

"Oh, isn't it dreadful!" Miss Holbrooke exclaimed.

"But she was cautious to speak in so low a tone that no eavesdropper could possibly overhear her words."

"Yes, the outlook for him is a mighty bad one," the lawyer declared.

"I will visit him to-morrow."

"When I see him in the morning I will tell him that you will come, and I know from the way he spoke about the matter that he will be pleased."

Then Pefferkin instructed her how to set about gaining admittance.

"It will be very strange for me to go to such a place," the girl remarked.

"But, he is my countryman, for I am English, too, and now that he is in trouble, in a strange land, I feel that it is my duty to do all I can for him."

"It will be a very praiseworthy act on your part, I am sure," the lawyer remarked, and then he took his departure.

"That woman is a precious deep one, unless I am greatly mistaken," Pefferkin muttered to himself, as he descended the steps.

"I wonder if she suspects what the man in the Tombs wants of her?" he continued.

"I don't believe she does, for if she did she would not be so ready to make the call upon him, I surmise."

Whether this was the truth or not, on the following morning Miss Holbrooke made her appearance at the gloomy city prison.

Thanks to the lawyer's instructions, she did not have any difficulty in gaining admittance to the prisoner.

St. Germaine expressed his thanks to her for calling, placed the stool by the side of the bed, invited her to be seated, and then sat on the iron cot, as she complied with his request.

He arranged the matter in this way, bringing the girl close to him, so that it would not be possible for any one in the corridor without to overhear their words if they were careful to speak in a low tone.

"Well, Ramie, I am in a pretty bad hole," the prisoner declared.

"Yes; it is unfortunate," the girl replied, with a gloomy shake of the head.

"I thought I had arranged a mighty good game, and everything seemed to be progressing finely, but this is an uncertain world, and a man can't always judge by appearances."

"Some one in some way managed to catch onto our game, so a cunningly devised trap was laid and we tumbled into it."

"The five thousand dollars was a decoy?" the girl asked.

"Yes; it was put in the safe on purpose to get us to come after it, and the police were all ready to nab us."

"Do you suppose this Westerner—this young man who calls himself Freemont—had anything to do with it?" was the woman's next query.

"Well, I don't know," the prisoner replied. "Strange you should have a suspicion in regard to him. The thought that he had something to do with the matter occurred to me as soon as the police nabbed me."

"There is something about the man I do not like. I can't very well explain what it is, but in some way I have got the impression that he is dangerous."

"Just the idea I have of him. It is not possible that he is a police spy, for otherwise it would be strange that he should come to the house just in time to upset my little game."

"There is something mysterious about the man, and I distrusted him from the beginning."

"He worked the trick in an excellent way if it was his doing, and he must be connected with that terrible man-hunter, Joe Phenix, for he it was, apparently, who was in charge of the affair."

"If I succeed in getting out of this scrape it will give me a great deal of pleasure to call both of them to an account," the prisoner continued.

"You have some plan in view?" the woman asked.

The crook laughed.

"Did that suspicion come up in your mind when I sent for you?"

"Yes; I thought you needed my aid."

"And you are willing to give it?"

"Of course. Did you not befriend me when I needed assistance, and now I am ready to repay the debt by doing all in my power for you."

"You are a good girl, Ramie, and I felt sure you would not fail me in my hour of need. But, you will have to take some trouble, and run some risk."



"I care not; I am reckless, now, what I do."

"How is that?" the prisoner asked, gazing in her face with a curious look.

"I will tell you the truth," she replied. "I have been fool enough to fall in love with this Mr. Huntington."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, and I was so great an idiot that I believed I might be able to become his wife and settle down in a happy home."

"I don't see any reason why you shouldn't."

"The only reason is that the man doesn't care for me," the girl replied.

"Mr. Lenbold had a suspicion that there was a love affair between his daughter and the young lawyer, and I did my best to encourage him in the belief, for I really thought the pair were entirely too friendly," she continued.

"And you calculated that, if you excited the father's suspicion he would take measures to separate the two?"

"Yes; that was my idea; and Mr. Lenbold got the notion that the best way to break up the love affair, if there was one, was to make a match between Mr. Huntington and myself."

Then she related the particulars of the ten-thousand-dollar offer.

"He promptly refused it?" the prisoner queried musingly.

"Oh, yes; he said that he did not care for me, and that he would not marry a woman whom he did not love if he could gain a hundred thousand dollars."

"The daughter and he have, probably, come to an understanding?"

"Yes; I think so."

"Well, now to come to our mutton: I am not anxious to take a trip to Sing Sing for a long term of years, but I am securely booked for the stone jug if I don't succeed in making my escape."

"But is there any chance for you to escape?" the young woman asked.

"Yes, with your aid," and the prisoner explained his scheme.

She was to pay him a regular visit every afternoon, dressed in black and wearing a heavy coat and veil.

Then, on the fifth day—by which time, the crook calculated that all the prison officials who came in contact with her would be familiar with her appearance, so that her passing in and out would not excite any particular attention—he would assume her outward garments and pass out in her place.

He explained that one of the prison officials, the man who would be on duty at the time, had been "fixed" by a friend of his, and a liberal amount of money would make this keeper very short-sighted, at a certain time.

"The game you will play is, you have taken a romantic interest in me. You think I am falsely accused, the victim of circumstances, and you are justified in aiding me to escape."

"I will do it!" the girl declared, promptly.

"Of course it will probably throw you out of your position."

"I do not care. I would rather not remain longer in the Lenbold mansion. I hate that girl who has won the man I wanted, and if I stay I may be tempted to kill her!" she cried, fiercely.

In a few minutes more all the details of the plan were arranged and then Miss Holbrooke departed.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### THE DISCOVERY.

THANKS to the assistance rendered by the wily lawyer in bribing the prison official, the scheme of escape arranged by the prisoner was a complete success.

During the morning of the day when it was decided to make the attempt, the prisoner announced that he was ill.

The Tombs is notoriously a damp, unhealthy building, being built upon a spot where formerly stood the waters of a pond.

The drainage had not been properly attended to in the first place, and few unfortunates are confined for any length of time in the gloomy prison without having a malarial attack.

The Englishman reclined upon his cot

during the greater part of the time, pretended that he had lost his appetite, so he could not eat, and hardly touched his food.

The girl staid until the summons was given for all the visitors to depart, and as there happened to be an unusual number of callers that day, quite a little crowd went out together.

The prisoner, at dinner-time, had told the attendant not to bring him any supper, saying that he was satisfied he would get well quicker if he starved himself for a while; so no one entered the cell after the visitors were notified to depart.

When the attendants made the rounds at night, and, peering into the Englishman's cell, saw the prisoner extended on his cot, apparently asleep, they did not attempt to disturb him, concluding that everything was right.

And not until the succeeding morning was the discovery made that St. Germaine had assumed Miss Holbrooke's outer garments and made his escape, leaving the young woman in his place.

Miss Holbrooke having on a man's suit, exactly like the one worn by the Englishman, it was not until the prison attendant entered the cell in the morning that the escape was discovered.

Then, of course, a great ado was made. The Tombs warden was furious, and immediately suspended the man who had allowed the supposed woman to pass out.

The keeper protested vigorously that he was not to blame, as the disguised crook went by him with a lot of other women, half of whom had their handkerchiefs to their eyes, trying to stay their tears, and under such circumstances even the most careful man would be liable to be deceived.

The girl, who was really possessed of uncommon talent in the acting line, played the role which the crook had assigned her with wonderful skill.

In answer to the warden's stern inquiries she declared that she had assisted the prisoner to escape, first, because he was a countryman, born in England, as she had been, and second, on account of being firmly convinced that he was an innocent man falsely accused. Therefore she considered that she was only doing right to help him regain his liberty.

She played her part so well that the Tombs official withdrew in disgust, fully satisfied that the girl was a little weak in the head.

Miss Holbrooke had obtained permission from Mr. Lenbold to take a day's vacation, so her absence from the millionaire's mansion excited no wonder among its inmates.

Great was the astonishment though of all of them, with the exception of the Westerner, when they read in the afternoon newspapers an account of the escape of the Englishman and the daring part which the girl had played.

The old gentleman was extremely surprised, and he immediately consulted Freemont in regard to the matter.

"This is really one of the most astonishing things I ever heard of!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it shows that the girl has plenty of nerve," the Westerner replied.

"Oh, yes, but the idea of her helping this scoundrel to escape!"

"Well, I am not surprised, as far as that goes, for I had an idea, right from the beginning, that she was a pal of his."

"Is it possible?"

"That is correct. I didn't say so right out to you, for I saw that you had a good opinion of the young woman, and I felt pretty certain that you would not believe she wasn't all right until I could bring undisputable proofs to show you that she was not to be trusted."

"You do not believe, then, that this is the act of a romantic girl, as the newspapers try to make out."

"Oh, no!" the disguised detective averred, decidedly. "Her statement is merely designed to deceive the authorities in regard to her true motives."

"If they felt sure that she was a pal of the escaped crook, they would do their best to punish her for the part which she took in the affair, but if she can succeed in making them believe that it was the thoughtless act of a foolish, romantic girl, the chances are that her punishment will not be severe."

"Very true."

"Well, Mr. Lenbold, I do not think I can do you any good by remaining longer in your house, for my mission is accomplished. The crook who designed to plunder you has been exposed and driven away, and his pal, this Miss Holbrooke, who has managed to masquerade in the garb of honesty for so long, at last has had her disguise torn away."

"Yes, I am satisfied now that the girl has imposed upon me, and I should be unwilling to allow her to remain in my service."

"As far as you are concerned my work is ended, but as long as this crook is at liberty I cannot remain quiet."

"You will endeavor to recapture him?"

"Oh, yes!" with firm determination. "He is altogether too dangerous a man to be allowed to go at large, and so I shall strike in on his trail at once."

"I fear that you have a difficult task before you," the millionaire observed, with a grave shake of the head.

"The fellow is smart enough; his escape shows that; but, no matter whether these rascals are stupid or cunning, they are bound to come to grief in the end, for the very stars in their courses fight against them."

"It is a law of nature for scoundrels to go to the wall, in the long run!" the Westerner declared, and then he took his departure.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### A CONSULTATION.

FROM the mansion of the millionaire the Westerner proceeded immediately to the abode of Joe Phenix.

Freemont knew that the veteran detective could usually be found at home about six o'clock.

Joe Phenix's trusty old man-servant, who answered the bell, recognized the disguised detective, for it was not the first time that he had seen him playing the role of the young Western rancher.

The great man-hunter was at home, and when Freemont was ushered into his presence he found him looking over the evening newspaper.

"You have read the particulars of the escape of this rascal whom we thought we had caged so nicely?" the Westerner asked as soon as the door closed behind the servant, allowing him to speak freely.

"Yes."

"The woman was his pal, as we suspected," the Westerner informed his chief.

"True! and she, evidently, is a faithful follower, or else she never would have risked this bold step."

"She is a smart girl, there is no mistake about that," Freemont averred. "The neat manner in which she fooled the old millionaire with the slate reading business is ample proof."

"Yes, she worked the game extremely well; but Lenbold has a weak spot in his head, or else she never could have succeeded in deceiving him so completely."

"She did the trick with a 'spy' concealed in a cameo ring which she wore on the second finger of her left hand; that is, I believe the ring held the 'spy,' for the cameo was as large as a ten-cent piece, and the chances are big that it was not a 'square' article."

"Yes, undoubtedly that was the way she played the game."

"If you notice, the woman tells a plausible tale about how she came to aid the crook to escape, and you can see that the newspaper men have all taken the bait."

"They believe she is one of those romantic, high-strung creatures, who delight in doing foolish things of this kind," Freemont continued.

"Yes, the newspaper men are always glad to get hold of anything of this sort, for it gives them a glorious chance to write up the affair, and you can depend upon it that when these fellows get hold of a good story they take excellent care that it shall not lose anything in the telling."

"Oh, yes; no doubt about that!"

"It is plain from all the newspaper accounts that not a single one of the reporters has the slightest suspicion the woman's story is not true, and, in fact, the most of them seem inclined to think there must be some mistake about the matter, for it appears incredible to them that a man like the Englishman would willingly join hands with a pair of common crooks."

"You noticed that both the English con-



sul and Mr. Lenbold have been interviewed by these enterprising newspaper gentlemen for the purpose of getting all the information possible about the man."

"Yes, and, of course, all either of them can say is that it is their impression the man is an impostor."

"And now that the fellow has succeeded in getting out of the Tombs I think it will be wise for us to call upon the superintendent of police and give him the inside facts of the case," the veteran detective continued.

"That would be a good idea," Freemont assented. "And when the police are posted as to who the supposed Englishman really is, it may make it easier for them to hunt him down."

"There is not much chance of finding the superintendent at Headquarters at this time of day, but we can call there, and if he is not in we will go to his house."

"Yes, for the information is important, and the police ought to be put in possession of it as soon as possible."

"We will go at once!" Joe Phenix declared.

And then the two set out.

Fortune favored them, for the superintendent had returned to his office after dining in order to attend to some business which he had been obliged to leave unfinished.

He listened attentively when Joe Phenix told his suspicions in regard to the supposed Englishman.

"Captain Black Bill, eh?" the police chief exclaimed in surprise.

"Well, well, I am astonished!" he continued. "That fellow is a very much 'wanted' man, and the idea that the rascal should have the impudence to come right here to New York, just as if he considered that we men in the police line in the metropolis were nothing but a lot of chumps."

"If he had an opinion of that kind he has, probably, changed it by this time," Joe Phenix observed, dryly.

"Yes, yes! I should not be surprised if he had!" the superintendent exclaimed, laughing.

"He was promptly nabbed the first time he attempted to take a trick," Joe Phenix remarked.

"And he had put up a good game too," the superintendent observed.

"A very carefully-planned game, and it ought to have worked, but it didn't," the police chief continued.

"He managed to get out of the Tombs though, so he rather has the laugh on us, although we did spoil his game," the veteran detective observed.

"I will go right down to the Tombs at once and see if I can't get some information out of the woman!" the superintendent exclaimed.

Joe Phenix looked at his right-bower as if to ask him what his opinion was in regard to this matter.

The Westerner shook his head.

"You will find her a pretty hard customer to get anything out of, I am afraid," Freemont affirmed. "She is deep and cunning, as you can plainly see from the way she has fooled the reporters about this affair."

"These press men are smart chaps," the disguised detective continued. "But, to judge from the way in which they write about the case, none of them seem to have a suspicion that the woman is an old-time pal of the man whom she helped to escape."

"Oh, no; they all go on the idea that it was one of those foolish notions which women take into their heads sometimes," Joe Phenix remarked.

"Well, it will not do any harm for me to have a talk with the woman," the superintendent observed.

"I may be able to offer such inducements that she will think it wise to make a clean breast of the matter."

"It certainly will not do any harm to make the attempt," the veteran detective assented.

"If you haven't anything on hand which demands your time, come with me," the police chief said.

"No; my time is my own, and I will be pleased to accompany you."

"She doesn't know you, Mr. Phenix, so it is all right for you to go," the Westerner observed. "But if she should see me in company with the superintendent here, all the fat would be in the fire immediately, for she

would understand then that it was a chap about my size who had been instrumental in upsetting the carefully-planned game of the crooks."

The others agreed that it was best for the disguised detective to keep in the background.

A coach was called, and the three were carried to the city prison, but the Westerner remained in the office while the others called upon the woman.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

##### A STUBBORN WOMAN.

OF course the warden of the city prison was glad to oblige so great a man as the superintendent of the New York police, so he had Miss Holbrooke brought to his private office in order that the gentleman could talk with her at his leisure.

The woman appeared to be calm and unconcerned when she appeared.

"Have the kindness to be seated, miss," the superintendent said.

Miss Holbrooke complied without a word.

"Do you know who I am?" the police official asked, in a smooth, polite way, fixing his keen eyes on the face of the woman with a gaze as though he would read her very soul.

"No, sir, I do not."

"I am the superintendent of the New York police."

"Yes, sir," the girl remarked, calmly, the announcement not seeming to produce any impression upon her.

"And I have come to see if you would be willing to tell me all the particulars of this business."

"Yes, sir, I have no objections," Miss Holbrooke replied, in the most matter-of-fact way.

"I am glad to hear it!" the superintendent exclaimed, in accents of satisfaction.

"Oh, yes, I am willing to tell you all about it," the girl assented.

"Although one of the gentlemen who is connected with the prison here was kind enough to tell me that I ought not to talk to any one until I had an opportunity to consult a lawyer," she added.

"That is perfectly true, but I am an exception to the rule, being a man in authority," the official explained.

"Yes, sir, I suppose so," the prisoner replied, in a very simple and innocent way.

If the two men had not had a suspicion that she was a deep and designing woman, they would have been completely deceived, for there was no doubt that the prisoner was playing the part of an innocent, unsuspecting girl to perfection.

"You are in a very bad position here, and no doubt you will be punished severely if you cannot contrive in some way to mitigate the punishment," the superintendent declared, doing his best to make an impression upon the prisoner.

Joe Phenix had a high respect for the official head of the New York police force, for he knew that the superintendent was an extremely able man, but he did not agree with him in his treatment of this case.

It was his impression that the gentleman was merely losing time in endeavoring to get any information out of the woman.

Although it was the first time that the veteran detective had come in contact with the prisoner, yet as his "right bower," the skillful and cunning man-hunter, now masquerading in the disguise of the Western rancher, had spoken to him freely in regard to the woman, he thought he comprehended correctly just about what kind of a creature she was, and therefore it was his opinion that she would be fully a match for the head of the police force, although the official was undoubtedly an extremely able man.

"I know, sir, that I have been very foolish," the girl replied, in an humble way.

"Oh, yes, decidedly so!" the police official declared with a portentous shake of the head.

"You see, the trouble was, sir, that I did not stop to think about the matter at all, but acted entirely upon the impulse of the moment."

"Exactly! And if you had taken time to reflect upon the matter you would not have acted as you did?"

"No, sir, I would not."

"Well, since you have been foolish enough

to make the blunder, the best way for you to repair the error is to make a clean breast and tell me all the particulars of the affair," the superintendent remarked.

"I have no objection to do that, sir," the girl replied immediately.

The superintendent cast a glance at Joe Phenix as much as to say, "What do you think of the affair now?"

A quiet smile appeared on the face of the veteran as he gave a slight nod in answer to the official's inquiring glance.

It was his opinion that the superintendent was not going to get any information out of the woman, notwithstanding her apparent willingness to make a confession.

"I am in possession of a number of facts in regard to this man whom you assisted to escape," the superintendent observed. "And if you will tell me all you know about him I will agree to use my influence with the authorities so that your punishment will be much lightened."

"I will gladly tell you all I know, sir, for now I have awakened to a consciousness of my folly, and see how unwise I have been in having anything to do with the matter."

"Can you give me any information in regard to where the man is gone?" the police chief inquired.

"No, sir, I don't know anything about it," the woman replied.

"Can't give me a hint so that I can put the police on his track?"

"Oh, no, he never said a word about his future movements, and I never thought of asking him."

"All that was in my mind was to aid him to escape from this dreadful place, for I believed him when he declared to me that he was an innocent man."

The superintendent felt a strong inclination to swear just now, particularly as he happened to steal a glance at Joe Phenix and saw that the veteran had a quizzical smile on his lips.

To use the slang of the day, the woman was "stringing" him.

"Oh, come, now! this will not do!" the police chief exclaimed sharply, with a most decided change of manner.

"You must not think that you can pull the wool over my eyes, for you cannot work any trick of that kind."

"Sir!" cried Miss Holbrooke, in accents of surprise, depicting to the life the character of an astonished and rather frightened woman.

"Don't talk to me any such nonsense as that you believed him to be an innocent man!" the superintendent declared.

"But I did, and I do still, although I am aware now that it was very wrong for me to interfere in the case, for I ought not to have done so."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried the police official, impatiently.

"You know very well that he was guilty—you are aware that he was one of the biggest rascals that ever set the laws at defiance."

"Oh, sir, how can you say so?" the woman exclaimed, with such an appearance of innocent amazement that for a moment even the experienced police chief was staggered, and a vague idea came into his mind that it might be possible Joe Phenix and his satellite had made some mistake about the matter.

The idea was dismissed almost immediately though, for a sober second thought told the superintendent that it was much more likely for the woman to play a deceptive part than for an old and experienced man-hunter like Joe Phenix to be deceived.

"Young woman, you are making a great mistake in attempting to deceive me," the superintendent declared sternly.

"You are in a very bad position, and will most surely be severely punished if you do not succeed in inducing the authorities to make it light for you," he continued.

"You are probably going on the idea that we don't know all the particulars about this man, but if so you are greatly mistaken, for we know that this pretended Englishman is a well-known Western desperado, one William Black, commonly called Captain Black Bill!"

And as he made the announcement the superintendent watched the face of the woman narrowly.



Only a mild expression of astonishment appeared on her features, such as would be natural under the circumstances, but no embarrassment or alarm.

"Well, sir, I don't know anything about it," she asserted.

Then the official lost his temper, and he told the woman plainly just what he thought about the matter.

"This accusation is dreadful, but I know that you cannot prove that I knew anything about him!" she declared in tearful indignation.

The superintendent tried again to convince the woman that it would be wise for her to confess, but as she was stubborn he departed very angry.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A SCHEME OF VENGEANCE.

ALTHOUGH, after the escape of the Englishman was discovered, the police did their best to get on the track, yet no clue to the man was obtained.

As he had so many hours' start, it was the belief at Police Headquarters that he had left town, and so a searching inquiry was made at all the railway depots and ferry-houses, but without success.

The routine was followed in this case. A full description of the fugitive was sent to all the police stations, where it was read aloud to the men, and they were instructed to keep their eyes open.

This is the usual custom, but when he police have to deal with a first-class rascal such as Black Bill plainly was, the precaution does not amount to anything.

If the warning relates to some petty criminal, who does not know enough to disguise his appearance when he is aware that the police are on his track, then the officers stand some chance of arresting their man.

But in the case of a hardened crook, capable of changing his personal appearance so that his most intimate acquaintance would have a difficulty in recognizing him, the description furnished to the policemen isn't of any use, for it is certain that the "wanted" man wouldn't appear at all like the account given of him.

Black Bill was both a cunning and a careful fellow, and had made his arrangements in regard to his escape in advance, so that if he succeeded in getting out of the Tombs, it would not be an easy matter for the police to get on his track.

The big fellow with the black beard, William Valverde, or Mexican Bill, as his pal called him—the man who personated Black Bill when the Guttenburg sport endeavored to entrap the Westerner—had been instructed to wait in Baxter street with a small covered wagon such as are used by tradesmen.

A wagon of this kind could stand in a poor quarter of the city for an hour or more without attracting attention, or exciting observation.

This wagon was only a short block away from the prison.

So within three minutes after leaving the Tombs the fugitive was in the wagon.

Mexican Bill, who was dressed in a well-worn suit of clothes, with an old slouch hat pulled down over his brows, so that he resembled the average driver, drove at a moderate pace through the first cross street to the Bowery, up which he then proceeded.

The back curtain of the wagon was down, it was tightly fastened, and immediately after getting on board the vehicle, the fugitive hurried to the rear of it and removed the woman's disguise.

Another one was there in readiness for him.

The fugitive put on a short-haired black wig; then, with a bottle of skin-stain, and the aid of a small mirror, he speedily made his hands and face assume the hue which nature gives to the children of a tropical clime.

After he put on the common rough suit of clothes, with a flannel shirt, putting the things right over the clothes he wore, pulled the battered soft hat down over his eyes, and took his seat by the side of Mexican Bill, his appearance was so changed that it would not

have been possible for any one to recognize him.

The fugitive sat down by the driver just after the wagon turned into the Bowery.

Mexican Bill surveyed him with a critical air.

"Well, how do you like the get-up?" the fugitive inquired.

"It is jest elegant and no mistake!" Mexican Bill declared.

"I think I could face the whole police force of the city, detectives and all, without any danger of being recognized."

"You are jest right, by hookey! I reckon I have known you 'bout as well as I ever knew any man, and I will be hanged if I could pick you out if I met you in a crowd."

"The police will make a hot search for me undoubtedly, for this escape of mine will be apt to put them on their metal."

"Oh, you bet!" and the big fellow chuckled in glee.

"It will raise a precious row—no doubt about that, and, going on the principle of locking the stable-door after the horse is stolen, the fly cops will strain every nerve to recapture me."

"But if we keep our eyes open, it will not be an easy thing for them to do the trick!"

"No, that it will not. Did you secure the room all right?"

"Yes; I got one in Stanton street," Mexican Bill answered.

"It is on the second floor back in a tenement-house, where there is a whole raft of people going in and out all day, so that we will not be apt to attract any attention," he continued.

"That will do nicely."

"I don't believe the police will get onto us, no matter how hard they try."

"It is my opinion that they will not succeed in discovering my hiding-place," the fugitive remarked.

"The best place in the world for a man to hide, when he seeks concealment, is in a big city," the crook continued.

"To search for a single man in a metropolis like New York is like the traditional search for a needle in a bundle of hay."

"Oh, yes, you hit it plum-center when you say that!" his companion affirmed.

"But the mistake that a good many men make when they get into a scrape of this kind, and succeed in giving the go-by to the stone jug, is that they return to their old haunts, just as the wild animal returns to its den, or the locality where it has grown up, after escaping the chase of the hunters," the crook explained.

"Yes, that is a fact," the other observed, thoughtfully.

"And it usually proves to be a fatal error both for human and animal."

"You are right."

"Now then, as soon as the police catch on to the fact that I have levanted, about the first thing they will do will be to visit all the sporting cribs in town where crooks are known to congregate."

"Oh, yes, that is certain to be the kind of game that they will play."

"So that if I was unwise enough to seek to hide myself in a locality of that kind, I would be pretty certain to be nabbed, even if my disguise was so perfect that the police could not recognize me."

"Some stool-pigeon, you know, would be certain to give away the fact that a stranger, about whom they knew nothing, had made his appearance, and then the odds are a thousand to one that I would be hauled up before the superintendent of police on some trumped-up charge in order to make me give an account of myself."

"And then all the fat would be in the fire!" Mexican Bill declared with a grin.

"Oh, yes," the fugitive assented. "Under circumstances of that kind my disguise would be sure to be penetrated, and that is why I wrote you to get a room on the east side of town, in or near the Jewish quarter."

"I worked the trick just as you said; and, I say, that lawyer was a handy fellow to have round!" Mexican Bill exclaimed abruptly.

"Yes, he is a good man. He arranged the game for me, and yet did it in such a way that if he was put under oath he could truthfully swear that he neither knew that I intended to escape, or had an idea where I had gone."

"I don't wonder that the crooks send for him when they get into trouble."

"Neither do I, for he is just the kind of man to get them out. If the game can't be worked in one way, he is ready to try another."

"Now, take my own case," Black Bill continued. "There wasn't one chance in a million of my getting out of the scrape if I once went before the court, for I was booked for the stone jug up the river to a dead certainty."

"You bet!" Mexican Bill exclaimed emphatically. "There ain't no doubt about that."

"The lawyer knew it, and so did I, so I set my wits to work to hatch up a plan of escape."

"Thanks to Ramie, who proved to be as true as steel, I got out all right, and now I am going to do my best to get square with the man who spoilt my game."

"Do you think it was that Western chap, Freemont?"

"Yes, I feel sure of it, and I intend to kill him before he is a month older!"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A SAFE HIDING-PLACE.

BLACK BILL hissed the threat in a tone of voice which plainly showed that he meant what he said.

His companion nodded approvingly.

"I reckon from what you have told me that you haven't made any mistake about the matter, and what a lucky thing it was that you concluded there wasn't any need of my going with the boys that night."

"Yes, as it turned out it proved to be a fortunate circumstance, for if we had all been captured I would not have had your assistance in this escape."

By this time the pair had arrived at Stanton street, and Mexican Bill guided the horse into the narrow way.

"The house is three blocks down," he explained.

"And I hired the wagon on the next block beyond. I will leave you at the house, and you can wait in the entry for me while I take the wagon home."

"All right! That will do."

"This is the house," Mexican Bill remarked in a minute or so, as he halted in front of one of the squalid, six-storied tenement-houses which abound in the locality.

Black Bill had instructed his companion to bring some wrapping-paper and string with him, so he could do the woman's attire up in a neat bundle.

With this bundle under his arm he got out of the wagon, and marched into the tenement-house with the air of a man who had been accustomed to the premises for a long time.

He proceeded along the hall until he came to the stairs, and there he halted to await Mexican Bill's return.

The careful crook was not giving a chance away. Although he had confidence that his disguise was so perfect that there was no danger of his being recognized even by the people whose acquaintance he had made while masquerading as the Englishman, yet he was going to keep out of sight of everybody as much as possible, although there was hardly any probability that any of the people whom he had met while an inmate of the millionaire's mansion would be encountered in this squalid quarter of the metropolis.

In five minutes Mexican Bill returned.

"Now then, jest come along with me, and I will take you to the roost," the black-bearded fellow remarked.

As he had said, the room was a back one, up one flight of stairs.

This was one of the tenement-houses where the inmates are herded in like sheep, there being four families on each floor.

The room was a medium-sized one, and very poorly furnished.

"This is jest the crib for such a game as you have got to play," Mexican Bill declared, after the pair were within the apartment, with the door securely locked.

"Yes; I think it will answer very well," the fugitive replied, as he seated himself by



the window and took a look out in the rear of the house.

There was a yard about twenty-five feet square at the back of the building.

Upon this narrow space the walls of the adjacent houses looked down, and the tall buildings shut out the sunlight so effectually that its beams never entered the room where the crooks sat.

"I say, old fellow, this is a good deal like a prison, isn't it?" the fugitive remarked.

"Yes, it ain't the most pleasant prospect in the world, but there is one consolation: no durned jailer is here to turn the key on you."

"Very true, and that is a decidedly agreeable fact."

"It was a mighty lucky thing, my finding this here roost!" Mexican Bill assumed, with a wise shake of his big head. "I might have hunted the hull durned city over, and the odds are big that I couldn't have found a better place."

"You see, we have got it all to ourselves, and nobody ain't got any right to come in here," he explained. "It is an old Dutchman who owns the ranch, and his family have gone on a visit to Germany, leaving the old man alone, so there ain't any women-folks to pry into a feller's business."

"Well, that is fortunate!"

"Oh, yes; the conditions are jest right!" Mexican Bill declared. "You kin bet your life that I took care to find out all about it before I took the room."

"The old man never asked any questions, you understand; I told him that I was in the newspaper business, but trade was dull now, and so I and my pardner thought we would take a furnished room so as to cut down on the expenses."

"That was a good yarn."

"The old Dutchman swallowed it jest as nice as could be," Mexican Bill averred with a grin.

"In fact, I don't think the old man paid any attention to what I said at all," he continued. "The only thing that he was anxious about was how much I would give for the room and how long did I think I would stay."

"Yes, I understand; the kind of man who wouldn't bother his head about his tenants as long as they planked up the cash promptly."

"That is it! That is his style to a hair!" the other exclaimed.

"Well, I hooked my fish right away by telling him that I would give him sixteen dollars a month for the room—would pony the ducats up right away—and hauled the 'cases' out on the spot, mind you, and I reckoned we would stay right along with him."

"I don't wonder that the man was anxious to secure such desirable tenants."

"Oh, he fairly jumped at the chance!" the other declared.

"And after he got the money he said that, as all his women folk were away, he would have to attend to fixing up the room himself, and though he wasn't much of a hand at making beds, yet he had no doubt he could manage to make us comfortable."

"And that gave you just the opportunity you wanted, eh, to tell him that we would attend to the room ourselves?"

"Exactly, and I think the old coon reckoned that I might make an offer of the kind if he explained that he wasn't very good at such work."

"Well, it is just what we want," Black Bill observed.

"Now, for a couple of weeks I will lie low until the hot hue and cry is over," the chief crook continued.

"The chances are that a fearful row will be kicked up over my escape, and the detectives will leave no stone unturned to discover where I have gone."

"Don't you think they will reckon you have dusted out of the city?" Mexican Bill asked. "Most men would be mighty apt to try a game of that kind if they were situated as you are," he continued.

"They will undoubtedly come to that opinion in a week or so after they have hunted high and low in the city without discovering me, or even getting the slightest clue to my trail," the chief crook replied.

"The chances are big then that these smart fly-cops will be sure to attempt to ex-

cuse their failure to capture me by saying: 'Oh, he jumped right out of the city on the night of his escape, and that is the reason why we couldn't put salt on the tail of this downy bird!'"

"You are right, by hookey!" Mexican Bill exclaimed.

"That is jest the way these smart ducks will try to get out of it."

"The detectives, in a case of this kind, are a good deal like a pack of dogs, first they chase in one direction, helter-skelter, just as if their lives depended upon their speed, and then, all of a sudden, they start in on a new track and abandon the old one completely."

"That is right!" the other assented. "You have got that figured down to a fine point! The detectives will about break their necks to catch you for a week or so, and then, if they don't succeed in getting on the track, they will give it up as a bad job and go at something else."

"Exactly my argument. And then, these New York fly-cops have no suspicion that I am a particularly desperate fellow," the crook observed.

"All I am wanted for is a little bit of a two-cent robbery, so to speak, for we didn't get away with the money, although we succeeded in getting the boodle all right, but the detectives presented us with the collar before we could get out of the house. It isn't like as if you had committed murder and there was a big reward offered for you," the other observed.

"After a week or so of ineffectual search, the chances are that the bloodhounds will cease to trouble their heads about me."

"I will wait for two weeks, 'to make assurance doubly sure,' as I heard a fellow say in a play at the theater once."

"For that length of time I will not stir out of the house, so that there will be no danger of my being spotted; then I will quietly lay in wait for this Westerner, Freemont, some night, and see if I can't sand-bag him into another world!"

And there was a ferocious accent in the man's voice as he spoke.

"You will have to work the game mighty cunning to be able to get ahead of that galoot!" was Mexican Bill's opinion. "Durned if he didn't handle me as no mortal man ever handled me afore!"

"I shall not give him a chance!" the other replied, "for I shall take him by surprise."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE GUTTENBURG MAN AGAIN.

AND now, leaving the two crooks to plan and plot how to take vengeance upon the Westerner, whom they suspected of being a spy of the police, we will return to the Guttenburg sport, whom we have neglected too long.

Freemont had notified Boone of the capture of the supposed Englishman, and the discovery which had been made in regard to him.

"Oh, he is a tricky cuss, and no mistake!" the Guttenburg sport exclaimed. "A man could bet his life on that, and he would win, every time!"

"Now it is perfectly plain how he managed to fool me that day, at the Astor House. I knew I didn't make any mistake about the room, or about seeing him go in, but he was too smart for me."

"He is jugged now, all right! I am glad of it; and when the proper time comes, I will appear in court and identify the rascal as being the Captain Black Bill, for whom the rewards are offered out West."

The prompt escape of the crook of course prevented the Kentuckian from carrying out this purpose, and there was no man in the metropolis who took the sight of the prisoner more to heart than the Guttenburg sport.

"Dog-gone it!" he cried in wrath when he read the account of the escape in the evening newspaper.

"The way that fellow manages to sneak out of a scrape is truly wonderful!" he continued.

"And as he has got a good twelve hours' start of the police, the prospect of their cap-

turing the scoundrel doesn't seem to me to be at all rosy.

"The chances are that he jumped the town as soon as he could get a train, and that knocks me out of the game, for the odds are big that after this razzle-dazzle he will give New York a wide berth, and I am not rich enough to be able to abandon my work and devote my time to hunting him down in the wilds of the West."

It made the Kentuckian angry to think that the man had managed to slip out of the net, but, as it was one of the things which couldn't be helped, there was nothing to do but to "grin and bear it," as he remarked with the air of a philosopher.

However, the all-wise Providence which rules this world usually interferes to defeat the schemes of the evil-doer.

As the sport sat meditating over the matter a message came from a poor devil who had been employed in the stable.

He was sick and without money at his sister's house in Stanton street.

"Wouldn't Mr. Boone come and see if he could do something for him?"

The warm-hearted Kentuckian seized his hat and started immediately.

The house he sought was directly opposite the one wherein the two crooks had taken refuge, and as Boone came out, after paying a visit to the sick man and leaving enough money to make him comfortable, he saw Mexican Bill enter the tenement-house!

He recognized the man at once, and, acting on the impulse of the moment, played the spy upon him; so he tracked him right to his room without the wanted man having a suspicion that his footsteps had been watched.

The sport reasoned that there was a chance that the other man wasn't far off; so he hurried to impart the information to the Westerner.

Freemont immediately took the sport to Joe Phenix, and then the three set out for the Stanton street tenement.

When they arrived at their destination the sport knocked at the door, as the three had arranged.

Mexican Bill opened it, cautiously, and the moment a crack was visible Boone threw his weight against the door, knocking the ruffian into the center of the room.

Out came Black Bill's revolver, but in a game of this kind the Kentuckian was hard to beat.

He fired, and mortally wounded the crook before the outlaw could discharge his weapon.

Down went the astounded Black Bill, gasping in agony.

"That is for the girl whose life you ruined at Salt Lick, Kentucky!" the Guttenburg man cried.

The stricken desperado glared up in the face of his slayer, essayed to speak—to howl defiance at the avenger—gave a gasp, and died.

Our story now is ended. A few more words, and we will bid the reader farewell.

Mexican Bill was sent to join his companions in jail. All three were speedily tried and convicted, for as soon as the black-bearded ruffian was nabbed, a couple of victims came forward and identified him as a sandbagger.

The old millionaire kept a close watch over his daughter, and soon became satisfied that she did love the young lawyer.

He took the girl to task, and she did not deny the soft impeachment.

The father stormed and threatened; the daughter cried, and—well, in the end, finding that the young lady was resolute, the irate father gave his consent, and the wedding was a glorious one.

Ramie Holbrooke, the daring adventuress, who had played so bold a game, really one of Black Bill's several wives, was punished by imprisonment for aiding the rascal to escape, and when she came out disappeared.

And the Westerner, Freemont, the boyish-looking rancher?

No wonder he appeared so youthful, for in reality it was Mignon Lawrence, the actress-detective, Joe Phenix's right bower, who had once more made her mark as one of the most artful and successful shadows in the Great City.



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